



House of Commons Debates

THIRD SESSION, FIFTH PARLIAMENT.—48 VIC.

SPEECH OF HON. E. BLAKE, M.P.,

ON THE

DISTURBANCE IN THE NORTH-WEST.

OTTAWA, JULY 6TH, 1885.

WAYS AND MEANS—THE DISTURBANCE IN THE NORTH-WEST.

Mr. BOWELL moved that the House again resolve itself into Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. BLAKE. I desire, before this motion is carried, to bring before the House, a question of which I gave notice at the earliest possible moment. I gave notice, through my hon. friend from South Huron (Sir Richard Cartwright), of my intention of bringing up the question of the North-West on the same evening on which the First Minister brought down the last papers which he said he intended to bring down this Session, and since that time I have been awaiting the opportunity which now, perhaps a little unexpectedly, has arisen. I rise to charge upon the Government, in their administration of affairs in the North-West, grave instances of neglect, delay and mismanagement, prior to the recent outbreak, in matters deeply affecting the peace, welfare and good government of this country. I do not intend to touch upon many questions connected with the administration of affairs in the North-West, which yet prove, in my judgment, the truth of that accusation, but which, for all that, are more remotely connected with the particular events which will form, so far as I am concerned, the subject of the present discussion. For example, the general railway policy, the general tariff policy, the general policy of inflation, the general land policy, the general use that has been made of the domain, and of the power to appoint to offices by the Government—that conduct, generally speaking, which, without special

reference to this matter, led an eminent publicist, not devoted to either party, after a visit to that country during the late summer, in which, indeed, he did not touch the regions which are particularly affected by the present disturbances, but in which he saw what was to be seen and heard what was to be heard along the great line of railway communication—I say which led that eminent publicist, Mr. Goldwin Smith, in a review of his visit, to use these words:

"Nobody doubts that the intentions of the Ottawa Government towards the North-West, are good. But it is a distant Government; its all powerful chief has never himself been in the North-West; and references or appeals to it are tedious and precarious. It is a party Government, and it cannot resist the importunities of hungry partisans, who mark the new and defenceless territory as their perquisite, though the consequence of yielding has inevitably been injurious to the political morality of a young community, the foundation of whose character ought to have been laid in honor. The parliamentary system, though the best for those who are represented, is, for those who are unrepresented, or inadequately represented, the worst."

And again:

"Old politicians think only of voting power; but there is a power besides that of voters, which, if a deaf ear is turned to the remonstrances of the North-West, will probably soon be encountered. Not that there exists the thought of violence. Nowhere is the reign of law more perfect than among these Canadian pioneers. What they contemplate, in the last resort, is an appeal to England for release from the Confederation, and for the establishment of the North-West as an independent British colony."

Now, Sir, the matters to which I have referred we have, from time to time, pressed upon the consideration of the Government, and with proofs, though I do not speak of them

to-day, because the discussion of the conduct of the Government will—the papers being yet unprinted, and it being necessary, therefore, to make a more exhaustive review than if they had been printed, as they ought to have been, and the course of events over a period of eight years being necessarily to be traced—over-tax one's strength, and for the same reason I propose to summarise only a large number of the more nearly related matters. I am relieved from the necessity of engaging now in any discussion of some important topics. I have already taken occasion to point out to the House the events of the year 1869-70, and their bearing upon the more recent transactions. I have already stated my view of the nature and extent of the responsibility of the Government in connection with North-West affairs. I have already pointed out that the Government, in view of the late events, is really on the defensive, and is bound to vindicate itself, being *prima facie* responsible for such occurrences as have taken place in a self-governing community. The Government has declined that challenge, but it has courted enquiry, it has challenged attack, and it has denied all fault and blame. One question, which is very material to be discussed, I have already treated in part—the question of local defence—the course of the Government with reference to the local corps of the North-West; and I have also taken the opportunity to refer to another very important point, the lack of those representative institutions, which, had they been granted earlier and been as effective as we might expect, would have proved the safety valve which would have prevented the recent affair. I may say at once that there has been, in my view, a scandalous breach of duty on the part of the Government, with reference to bringing down the papers. From the earliest period at which we had news of the revolt, I have been appealing for those papers. They have come down reluctantly, at long intervals, with pretence of a difficulty in copying, and, when produced, those which have been produced have borne upon their face marks that they had been ready for production for many days before it was thought fit to lay them on the Table. From time to time essential papers have been declined, and even to-day papers which as I shall show are extremely important, in order to reach the full extent of the culpability of the Government, are retained—papers which it is essential should be produced, and which, if they be not produced, must be elicited at some future day through the medium of a select committee. But, although gravely compromising papers, as I believe I shall be able to show, have been withheld, yet enough has come to light in my judgment to enable us to decide in the affirmative on the motion which I shall place in your hands. Now, Sir, to deal with events and a course of administration which runs over so many years at all effectively, it is necessary to grapple with the state of the facts as to each important question separately, and I propose to take that course; but it must never be forgotten that the combined operation of the different series of facts, and of several grievances, concurrently acting upon the mind of a population, is much greater than that of simple addition—that the operation is intensified, and that the difficulties are infinitely greater than if the same sets of grievances were operating at different times. There are questions which arise concerning the half-breeds, questions concerning the Indians, and questions common to whites and half-breeds alike. As to Indian affairs, I have already shown the great importance of the Indian question. I do not propose to embarrass this discussion—as I might by the multiplicity of proofs which I should have to bring forward—by dealing at length with the Indian question, for the sufficient reason that the proofs upon that subject are more easily accessible to hon. members and to the country than the unprinted proofs to which I shall have to refer upon other questions. They are to be found in the Blue Books, and in the reports, and

they show, in my judgment, neglects, delays, incompetency, bad appointments, mistaken policy, and breaches of promise, resulting in the fact that many of the Indians had got into a highly discontented and excited state, and were ripe for trouble in 1884-85. But this fact is undeniable that, to whatever cause it was due, such was the condition of many of the Indians at that time. Now, Sir, with reference to the half-breeds, I propose to examine the facts in connection with the claims of the half-breeds of the North-West Territories to recognition in respect of the extinguishment of the Indian title; the facts in connection with the claims of the unenumerated half-breeds of the Province of Manitoba in respect of the extinguishment of the Indian title; the claims of the land holding half-breeds for grants and for surveys, particularly in connection with river lots. And as to the whites and the half-breeds in matters of common concern, I shall touch, though only touch, on the claims of the land holders for grants and surveys; the claims as to the reserves of various kinds; the claims in connection with wood regulations and local improvements; and claims as to representative institutions. But on these questions I shall only repeat the expression of my opinion as to their importance, and their felt importance, to the people. I do not propose, Sir, to engage in the discussion of the actual outbreak or the events of the campaign. I think, as I have more than once said, that it would be entirely premature to do so, and with the exception of perhaps one slight incident I shall disengage the present discussion from the question of the immediate preparations for and the actual conduct of the campaign. And before I engage upon the enquiry to which I have just pledged myself, I may say, that having passed a good many years of my life in this House and elsewhere, in the investigation of evidence and the analysis of facts, I never rose to state a case which was based upon facts, with a more absolute conviction of the overwhelming character of that case and the inexorable conclusion which is to be drawn from those facts, than I do upon the present occasion. My task is therefore, in this respect, easy. It is rendered difficult only by the number and range of the events, and the multiplicity of the proofs which I shall have to endeavor to adduce, and which I shall submit to all candid persons inside and outside of this House, in the conviction that but one conclusion can be reached as to the result. Now, Sir, with reference to the claim of the half-breeds of the North-West Territories for consideration in respect to the extinguishment of the Indian title, I call attention to the fact that that claim was recognised, in so far as the half-breeds of the original Province of Manitoba were concerned, in the course of the events of 1869-70. By the bargain that was made, incorporated in the Act of 1870, 1,400,000 acres of land were set apart to be divided amongst the half-breed minors in respect of the extinguishment of their claims to the Indian title. By subsequent legislation, it was provided that the half-breeds, heads of families, should get a 160-acre grant. I maintain that the claim of the half-breeds of the North-West Territories to consideration in respect of the extinguishment of the Indian title was then settled in principle. Justice is the same on the banks of the Saskatchewan or the Qu'Appelle as on the banks of the Red River or the Assiniboine. It was impossible to find a different rule to be prescribed for different parallels of latitude, and it was absolutely impossible to say that that which had been granted in the one case should be declined in the other. Now, I rejoice that it happens to me, who am not of the same race or of the same creed with these French half-breeds, to point out these circumstances, because it cannot be said of me that I am moved by those prejudices or predilections which might be charged against one of their own race or creed. It is not on any such grounds that this question is to be handled, it is to be handled as a question of justice, of policy,

of statesmanship. Of the half-breeds, I only say as I have said before, that I recognise them as fellow Canadians, misled and deeply wrong, but we are not to try them here; their trial is appointed elsewhere. It is here, and here alone, in the first instance, that the Government of this country can be tried for its conduct in respect of these transactions; and that trial, and the ascertainment of their responsibility, is a task which fitly falls upon our shoulders. I ask whether the Government has done its duty in respect of this portion of the population of Canada, and I answer that question, as I think you will answer it, after you have heard the evidence, by an emphatic negative. I believe there never was a grosser case of neglect, of delay, and of mismanagement than that which I am about to develop with reference to this particular claim. The question did not become urgent in the North-West Territories very early, because there was but little interference with the half-breeds of the North-West Territories for some years. There was comparatively little settlement in the country; there were but few surveys; there were but few authorities of any kind to interfere; things went on for a while pretty much in the old groove. But by degrees settlement increased; by degrees new arrangements were being made; by degrees a new order of things pressed itself upon attention, and concurrently with that gradual change, there came the rapid disappearance of the buffalo which, about the years 1877, 1878, 1879, indicated the imminent, urgent necessity of some other livelihood than that which many of these half-breeds had wholly depended on, and most of them had in large part depended on in prior years. It was in the early part of 1878 that the regular, formal agitation on this subject took shape. And here, Sir, I may pause to notice with amazement a letter which I have seen published, emanating from a member of the Government, dated so far late as the 6th June last—a letter from the Secretary of State—in which he says:

"If the half-breeds had serious complaints against the Canadian Government, the ordinary method of petition was open to them as to every free citizen. They have not availed themselves of it."

Can it be that on the 8th June, 1885, a member of the Government of Canada should yet have been in such dense ignorance of the facts with reference to this case as to make that public statement? And can it be that that member should be the Secretary of State of Canada? Why, the record is one long cry for redress; but it never reached his ears. About the beginning of June, 1878, a petition was presented from Prince Albert and forwarded to the Government by Captain Moore—that gentleman who is amongst the volunteers who joined the police at the Duck Lake fight—signed by 151 persons; it contained allusion to certain topics, and it contained, amongst others, this paragraph:

"Lastly, your petitioners would humbly represent that whereas a census of the half-breeds and old settlers was taken in the Province of Manitoba shortly after the organisation of that Province, with a view to the distribution of scrip, said scrip having since issued to the parties interested, and whereas at the time this census was taken many half-breeds, both minors and heads of families, resided in the territories and were not included in the said census, your petitioners would humbly represent their rights to participation in the issue of half-breed or old settlers scrip, are as valid and binding as those of the half-breeds and old settlers of Manitoba, and are expected by them to be regarded by the Canadian Government as scrupulously as in that Province; and with a view to the adjustment of the same, your petitioners would humbly request that a census of the said half-breeds and old settlers be taken at as early a date as may be conveniently determined upon, with a view to apportioning to those of them who have not been already included in the census of Manitoba their just allotment of land and scrip."

To that petition no acknowledgment or, at any rate, no answer is on record amongst the papers brought down. On the 1st February, 1878, the half-breeds of St. Laurent had a public meeting, at which Gabriel Dumont was president and Alexander Fisher secretary, both prime movers in the

recent affair, and they determined upon several requests. Amongst them was this:

"That there be granted to all half-breeds who have not participated in the distribution of scrip and lands in the Province of Manitoba like scrip and grants of lands as in that Province."

About March, 1878, there was a petition of French Canadians and half-breeds of St. Albert on various subjects. It refers to the petition of St. Laurent, to which I have just referred, and it contains this paragraph:

"That all the heads of families of half-breeds and their children who have not participated in the distribution of scrip and land in the Province of Manitoba be allowed such like scrip and grants of land as were allowed in the said Province (at least that bush lands should be granted to them)."

Both these petitions were transmitted by Lieutenant Governor Laird, in February and in April, to the Government.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. What year?

Mr. BLAKE. In 1878, during the time of my hon. friend from East York (Mr. Mackenzie). In 1878 there was a petition of the half-breeds of Cypress Mountains, which contains 269 signatures. It contains a number of statements as to their distressed condition, due principally to the disappearance of the buffalo, and makes this declaration:

"That the majority of us, upon the cession of the Province to the Local Government, were temporarily absent, and were thereby deprived of the benefit of the scrip given to those half-breeds, who were at that time present in the Province."

It prays for several advantages, amongst others seed, grain, agricultural implements, and for a large reserve in a particular locality. And here comes, following on that petition, a resolution passed by the North-West Council. On the 2nd August, 1878, the council of the North-West Territory, in its legislative session, passed the following resolution:

"Whereas this council has had under consideration a petition of certain half-breeds who usually frequent the neighborhood of Cypress Hills"

And they proceed to describe the substance of the petition:

"And whereas it is not in the power of this council to grant lands, assistance to procure such, or any such like advantages, resolved therefore that the Lieutenant Governor be requested to forward a petition to the Dominion Government together with the following suggestions which they respectfully and strongly urge may receive the early and earnest attention of His Excellency the Governor General:

"1st. That it would be injudicious to set apart reserves of land for the half-breeds of the North-West Territory or give them negotiable scrip;

"2nd. That in view, however, of the fact that grants of land or issues of scrip were made to the half-breeds of Manitoba towards the extinguishment of the Indian title to the lands of that Province, there will undoubtedly be general dissatisfaction among the half-breeds of the said territories unless they receive some like consideration.

"3. That this consideration would most tend to the advantage of the half-breeds were it given in the form of a non-transferable location ticket, for say, 160 acres for each half-breed head of a family, and each half-breed child of parents resident in the said territories at the time of the transfer thereof to Canada, the ticket to be issued immediately to any half-breed eighteen years of age or over, on furnishing evidence of claim, and to every child on arriving at that age and furnishing the necessary evidence.

"4. That each half-breed holding such a location ticket, should be allowed to locate it upon any unoccupied Dominion lands, but the title of the land so entered should remain in the Crown for ten years; and if, at the expiration of three years after such entry, the half-breed locatee has made no improvements on the land, his claim thereto shall be subject to forfeiture.

"5. To induce those half-breeds who now procure their livelihood by hunting on the plains to abandon their present mode of life and settle on their locations, by which course it alone appears possible to avert the great destitution with which they are threatened owing to the imminent early extinction of the buffalo, that aid in agricultural implements and seeds be allowed them for three years, but only once for each family that may settle within that time.

"6. That half-breeds who have shared in the Manitoba distribution of lands and scrip should not be entitled to receive location tickets in the territories though now resident therein."

On the 30th September, 1878, Lieutenant Governor Laird transmitted the Cypress Hills petition, and the resolution of

the North-West Council which I have read, in a despatch which contains these words:

"I feel it my duty to ask you to urge upon the Dominion Government the necessity of taking early action with respect to the claims set forth by the half-breeds of the Territories, either in the direction indicated by the resolutions of the North-West Council, or in such other manner as the Government may deem meet. The half-breeds of Manitoba—the heads of families as well as the children—having received either script or land, I may remark that from what information is within my reach, I have no doubt the half-breeds of the Territories who think they have as good a claim to consideration as their compatriots in Manitoba, will be very much dissatisfied unless they are treated in a somewhat similar manner."

By the time that reached Ottawa the Government had changed, the hon. gentleman had assumed the reins of office, and, with the reins of office, he had accepted the Department of the Interior and the Superintendency General of Indian Affairs, thus identifying himself in both those aspects with the questions which are involved in this controversy. On the 20th November, 1878, his Deputy Minister acknowledged the despatch of Governor Laird, the resolution and the petition, and stated that that despatch, with its enclosures, would be brought under the consideration of the Minister on his return to the seat of Government. About the same time at which that despatch was written, the Lieutenant Governor visited this section of the country, and I quote from the newspaper the account of his visit:

"While the Lieutenant Governor was at Duck Lake, a deputation of half-breeds from the St. Laurent waited on his honor, and, in most respectful terms, urged him not to allow Chief Beardy's reserve to surround their claims or encroach upon the lands where they had been accustomed to cut hay. They also desired to be informed if any reply has been received to the petition forwarded, through his honor, to Ottawa, respecting the half-breeds in the territories. The Lieutenant Governor thereupon explained matters to them as fully as was in his power. When he had concluded Norbert Laurance, Esq., cordially thanked him for the obliging manner in which he had replied to their enquiries."

I have now shown you as clearly as I could what the position of this question was at the time when hon. gentlemen opposite commenced their dealing with it, in the fall of the year 1878. I have read you the petitions which had already been presented from the locality, the resolution of the council, the despatch of the Lieutenant Governor, all indicating that the question was one for early solution, the North-West Council being of opinion that modified compensation ought to be given in a different form from that which had obtained in the Province of Manitoba, for reasons which were sufficiently obvious; and the case being presented to the Government by the Lieutenant Governor as one for early action, either in the method devised by the council, or in some other method, at the peril of dissatisfaction. I have no complaint to make of the expedition with which the then Deputy Minister of the Interior, Mr. Dennis, grappled with the question. On the 20th December, 1878, Mr. Dennis presented to his Minister a very long memorandum dealing with the case of those claims, and from it I extract some passages. He submits to the Minister "that it is expedient with as little delay as possible to deal with the claims to consideration preferred by the half-breeds of the North-West Territories." He describes the half-breeds as of two classes, those of the plains, and those who, while spending part of the year in hunting the buffalo, possess settled homes. He says:

"The second-class may be illustrated by reference to those half breeds who are found at Edmonton, St. Albert, St. Laurent, St. Anne's, Victoria, etc., who have habitable and in some cases, good houses, where they reside and cultivate the soil to a greater or less extent, but still mainly depend for their means of living upon the buffalo."

He adds:

"Some uneasiness is felt by the half-breed element in the Territories in consequence of no steps having yet been taken towards the recognition of the demands put forward on their behalf. It must be freely admitted they have a claim to favorable consideration, and the question is, how is that claim to be satisfied so as to benefit the half-breeds, and at the same time benefit the country?"

He discountenances the absolute grant of lands, or treating them as wards and making Indian treaty with them. He proposes to offer them certain inducements to settle on land, and to learn to farm, especially to raise cattle, and of this plan he says:

"The immediate effect would be, assuming that the half-breeds themselves are willing to give it a trial, that we should have the whole of this element in sympathy with the Government in dealing with the plain tribes of Indians. In this way we should attract to our side a moral power which in the present critical relations of the various tribes of Indians towards each other and towards the Government, would prove of the greatest value to the Dominion."

He refers to the petition of the Cypress Hills half-breeds and the resolution of the North-West Council, and says he "is of opinion that encouragement additional to that recommended by the council would be required to induce the half-breeds to become settlers, and he fully believes that it would be in the interest of good government in the North-West to grant the same." He suggests "that the half-breeds, where wished for, should be permitted to take up their lands in such a way as to enable them to settle together in bands, and, wherever a band of 50 or more families form themselves into one community or settlement, they should be provided with a school or teachers for a term of years, such teachers to be selected with a view to being able to instruct them in the raising and care of stock, also in practical agriculture, including the use and care of implements." He adds:

"The undersigned regards the state of affairs in the Territories in relation to the Indians and half-breeds as calling for the serious consideration of the Government, in view of additional complications which are not unlikely to arise owing to the presence on our soil of large numbers of armed Indians, refugees for the time being from the seat of war in the adjoining territory. He is of opinion that further means should be adopted to cultivate and maintain relations with Indians and half-breed populations calculated to attach them to us and to convince them that the Government is desirous of fulfilling its obligations to them in the utmost good faith."

He suggests a scheme of industrial schools, and he continues:

"The undersigned respectfully requests for the whole question discussed in this memorandum the early consideration of the Minister of the Interior, in order, if thought desirable, that a measure may be prepared embodying such policy as may be decided upon in good time for the ensuing Session of Parliament."

The action which appears to have been taken on that memorandum was, first, the appointment of Mr. N. F. Davin as a commissioner to enquire into the industrial school question, both in the Territories and in the United States, upon which, so far as I can apprehend, no final report has been brought down; secondly, to send the memorandum for the consideration and advice of Archbishop Taché, Bishop McLean, Bishop Macrae and Governor Laird. On the 23rd of December, 1878, three days after the date of the memorandum, Colonel Dennis writes to Archbishop Taché, transmitting the paper, in this language:

"As you will see by the tenor of the paper, I am fully impressed with the justice as well as the expediency of disposing of the question at the earliest possible period."

On the 29th January, 1879, Archbishop Taché replied in a very long letter to Col. Dennis' communication, and from that I shall make some extracts. Amongst the headings which the Archbishop treats is one "Importance of the Half-Breed Question."

"It must be freely admitted that the half-breeds of the North-West have a claim to favorable consideration. Great uneasiness is felt by them in consequence of no steps having yet been taken in their behalf. A liberal policy on the part of the Government would attract to its side a moral and physical power which in the present critical relations of the various tribes of Indians towards each other and towards the Government, would prove of the greatest value to the Dominion. On the other hand the half-breed element dissatisfied would form a standing menace to the peace and prosperity of the Territories. There is no doubt that the state of affairs in the Territories in relation to the Indians and half-

breeds, is calling for the serious consideration of the Government, and measures should be adopted to cultivate and maintain relations with the half-breed population calculated to attract them to us."

"The formidable Indian question has not yet arisen in our midst, owing largely to the influence of the half-breed element. The disappearance of the buffalo, and especially the extension of the settlers in the Indian country, are preparing difficulties which may be avoided, I hope, but which would otherwise involve such terrible and expensive results that it is the duty of all the friends of the Government and of the country to do all in their power to prevent such misfortune.

"The result depends in a great measure on the way the half-breeds would be treated. Friendly disposed, they will mightily contribute to the maintenance of peace; dissatisfied, they would not only add to the difficulty, but render the establishment of the country the next thing to an impossibility.

"2. What ought to be avoided when alluding to HALF-BREEDS—It is important in public documents to avoid comparing the half-breeds with the Indians; and it is not just to say that a certain class of them differ but little except in name from the Indians. They have not the tastes, habits and instincts of the Indians. They are hunters, traders or settlers, but no portion of them can be classified with the savages of the plains."

He proceeds to point out on what the settlements at Edmonton, St. Albert, St. Anne's, St. Laurent and Victoria, depend, and how those at Wood Mountain and Cypress Hills also live. He then adds:

"The half-breeds are a highly sensitive race; they keenly resent injury or insult, and daily complain on that point. In fact, they are daily humiliated with regard to their origin by the way they are spoken of, not only in newspapers but also in official and semi-official documents.

"3. GRANT OF LAND—Every one acknowledges the desirability for the half-breeds to settle definitely on lands to cultivate them. Here is a scheme which I take the liberty to propose:

"(a.) I estimate the half-breeds actually in the North-West to number about 1,200 families. Let the Government make 12 reserves for them in the very places the half-breeds themselves will like to have them.

"(b.) Each reserve should be for 100 families at least, and contain an area of 12 square miles of available land, that is to say, the extent of four townships.

"c. All the half-breeds, men, women and children, residing in the North-West on the 1st January, 1879, ought to receive two non-negotiable scrips for 80 acres of land each, to be located by them in one of the above mentioned reserves."

He proceeds to point out that this property should be inalienable for at least three generations, save exchanges of entire lots between half-breeds, which might be allowed.

"In the settlements already formed the half-breeds ought to be confirmed in the possession of the lot or lots they claim, and on which there are improvements, even which is very rare, when they claim more than 160 acres. When the lots claimed are less than 160 acres, scrips for the balance ought to be given."

Then, after entering into further details, he concludes by pressing once again, the importance of an early settlement of the question.

"SPEEDY SETTLEMENT OF THE WHOLE MATTER—It is desirable that the half-breed question should be decided without any further delay. The requisite legislation ought to be passed in the coming Session of the Legislature. Immediately after inspectors ought to be appointed, and I would particularly recommend Mr. Angus McKay as one of the inspectors. Surveyors will have to be sent to the Territories next summer, to mark immediately, at least, the outside lines of the reserves, with one or two rows of lots. Other details may come afterwards, provided they be not delayed unnecessarily. There is no doubt the difficulties increase with delay."

On the 18th January, 1879, Bishop McLean wrote in answer to the letter of Colonel Dennis:

"I thoroughly sympathise with you in the anxiety you show to conciliate the half-breeds of the North-West Territories. The plain Crees and the Blackfeet have been but recently reclaimed from a state of constant warfare between themselves by the introduction of the Mounted Police force; and the presence of large bands of Sioux, renowned for their warlike habits, might at any moment, without any administrative skill on the part of the Government, lead to dangerous outbreaks that would not only be deplorable in their immediate results, but tend to damage the prospects of the country in regard to settlement. In bringing so prominently into the foreground the value of the half-breed element being in sympathy with the Government in dealing with the Indians, I think you have grasped the main point of the whole question. The experience of all the years I have lived in the North-West points to

the conclusion that the Indian has a tendency, in all his dealings with the white man, to consult and largely to be guided by the opinion of the half-breeds. Therefore you have the whole half-breed element in sympathy with the Government in dealing with the plain tribe of Indians. I would express a very hearty conviction in the conclusion that you draw, namely: that we should attract to our side a moral power which, in the present critical relation of the various tribes of Indians towards each other and towards the Government, would prove of the greatest value to the Dominion."

I should have added that another question is touched on by the Archbishop, which is, that in existing settlements all the properties in the reserves should be sub-divided into lots of 10 chains broad by 80 in depth, in accordance with what was the ancient custom of the country. Bishop Macrae's statement is, perhaps, not material to be read; he declares that he has had but very little acquaintance with the subject. Governor Laird, on the 13th March, 1879, says:

If the half-breeds desire to settle down together I most certainly think that land should be for a short time reserved for them; but I believe it would be a mistake to lock up the land for a longer period than two or three years."

He discusses the question of teachers, and also of industrial schools, arguing rather against the practical availability of that proposition in the emergency, and adding these words:

"The wants of the Indians and half-breeds are pressing, and it appears to me that the same money that would support industrial schools could in the meantime be better employed in hiring a few practical men to go at once on the reserves and teach them how to plough, sow and save their crops, in order that, if possible, starvation in its worst form may be averted."

Just about the same time at which these various despatches were being written, there came the rumor that Louis Riel was going to the Saskatchewan—even at that early date. The *Saskatchewan Herald*, of the 24th March, 1879, contains this paragraph:

"The Emerson *International* gives currency to the rumor that Louis Riel intends going to the Saskatchewan next summer with a large French half-breed emigration to take place from settlements on the Red and Pembina Rivers. It is rumored that an agitation is on foot to obtain a reduction of the terms of his banishment, the Hon. Jos. Dubuc being understood to have promised to use his influence at Ottawa with the French Canadian members in support of the application."

On 15th May, 1879, by the Dominion Lands Act brought in during that Session, power is delegated to the Governor in Council:

"To satisfy any claims existing in connection with the extinguishment of the Indian title preferred by half-breeds resident in the North-West Territories outside the limits of Manitoba, on the 15th day of July, 1870, by granting land to such persons, to such extent, and on such terms and conditions, as may be deemed expedient."

So that not having decided upon the precise form of their policy they decided upon a quasi-recognition of the claim, and they asked Parliament to hand over to them absolute power and discretion to deal with it as they pleased, on what terms they pleased and when they pleased; and that power was granted. A question for our consideration from the time of the passing of that Act is, how they used the power which they so asked and so obtained? I will show that from that time up to 1885 they did nothing whatever. I will show they did nothing whatever with a question which had been declared by the Deputy head of the Department, by all persons who had been consulted under the advice of the Minister, to be a present question, a pressing question, a question which had already assumed the form of agitation, namely, public meetings and petitions, a question whose difficulty would be enhanced by time—I will show that having taken from Parliament *carte blanche* they never used their power from that day until the year in which we now are. The difficulties unquestionably were to be enhanced by time. No grievance grows less by time; no just demand diminishes in its intensity by time. The feeling of soreness, of irritation and neglect increases

by time. The demands are apt to be exaggerated by time. The situation grows complicated by time, and in this case it was perfectly clear it was to become more complicated by time, because we were dealing at that moment with a state of things in which but comparatively few of the half breed population had taken up land. There were very considerable numbers at certain points to which I have referred; but taking the whole population of the Territories a large number of them had not taken up and improved lands at that time, and therefore there arose no question on the two titles as to the bulk of the half-breed population, as to at all events the majority of the half-breed population—I mean the right to the extinguishment of the Indian title and their rights as settlers. That arose only as to those who had settled; but it was clear it was going to arise with a much larger proportion of the half-breeds from year to year because it was inevitable they must starve or settle. Those who had not settled lived entirely by the chase of the buffalo and by freighting, and the buffalo having disappeared, they must either starve or settle; and settling, of course, the question of their title as settlers as well as the Indian title would arise. Was it because there was no pressure upon the Government that this matter slipped by neglected? Not so. As I have said, their Deputy Minister had warned them; the North-West Council had warned them; the Governor had warned them; and the three advisors whom they called into council had warned them that it was a question which ought to be settled at once, delay in the settlement of which would enhance the difficulty, and which therefore merited and demanded the early attention of the Government. They did nothing during those six years; they formed no ministerial plan; they enunciated no ministerial policy; they passed no Order in Council; they did not even take the preliminary steps of having an enumeration; they waited until the outbreak was on foot, and then they acted as I will show you after a while. During 1879, after having obtained the parliamentary authority to which I have referred, nothing was done. But on 1st December of that year Colonel Richardson, who had been for many years as a stipendiary magistrate and a member of the council in the Territories, being in Ottawa, gave a memorandum, no doubt at the request of the Government, to Colonel Dennis, and in that memorandum he says:

"As soon as steps are taken to ascertain the number of half-breeds in the Territory who have not already shared in the Manitoba grant the scheme suggested by Colonel Dennis in the conclusion of his memorandum would I think give satisfaction generally."

He differs, however from him on two points: First, he thinks there should be no special educational facilities; and second, there is no need to teach the half-breeds to raise and care for stock, because they know all about it, and in fact they teach the whites the proper way of raising and caring for stock in that country. He adds that some half-breeds would prefer settling near white settlements. It seems to be very clear that the First Minister in charge of this matter was reluctant to recognise this claim. And that seems to be apparent from another letter by Colonel Richardson to Colonel Dennis, written on 13th January, 1880. That letter runs as follows:—

"DEAR COLONEL DENNIS.—Having passed three years in the North-West and during that period seen a good deal of the half-breed population, the following induced by the remarks of the right hon. the Premier in my presence last Saturday, may not be out of place, the subject of dealing with the half-breed element of the North-West being, as I then gathered, intended for early discussion.

"1. These half-breeds claim and insist that as a distinct class they have a share in the Indian title to the land outside of Manitoba which has not been extinguished, and as such distinct class entitled equally with the half-breeds of Manitoba to special consideration. That grounds exist for such contention appear by reference to statutes of Canada, 1870, Cap. 3, sec. 21.

"2. Admitting these half-breeds might (as some few have, but now regret) joined in the Indian treaties, I am convinced such a contingency is not only not probable, but that if they requested they would reject

the offer; besides I do not think their joining in the Indian treaties would be in the public interest, but decidedly the opposite.

"How best to deal with the element has, as you are aware, been considered and you already hold my views on the subject.

"I may however be permitted to express the opinion that opportunities now present themselves for removing the dissatisfaction existing among these people, and securing their good will towards the Government, because: 1. Their former occupation as hunters is gone. 2. They are as a class destitute. A further reason for urging as I respectfully do, early action is that they are scattered among the Indians and lately subjected to the evil influences of leading spirits of the Manitoba troubles of 1870, who during the past season have been traversing the country doing at least 'no good.'

Again you see, Mr. Speaker, the importance, in the view of a magistrate from the Territories, of early action, the danger of delay, the favorable character of the conjuncture of circumstances which then presented themselves for a settlement in a form which would be permanently beneficial to the half-breeds and at the same time to the country, and the efforts to remove the difficulty which he saw stood in the way from conversations he had with the Minister who seems to have held that the half-breeds had no well founded claim, and to have suggested that the Indian treaty was a good solution for any such claim. Nothing was done in 1880, although the year opened, as I have said, by this further communication from Colonel Richardson. In that year once again there was reference to danger, for amongst the papers brought down is a letter from W. L. Orde, Indian agent and clerk, North-West Indian Superintendency, Battleford, dated 3rd April, as follows:—

"I have the honor to inform you that an authentic report has reached here from the south, that Louis Riel is now agitating amongst the half-breeds, and the Sioux and Crow Indians, it is said with a view of an attack upon the Blackfoot and Blood Indians, the ostensible object being to wrest from the latter, a large number of stolen ponies. He may have other evil designs, and I think it well to let you know."

But although nothing was done at Ottawa, pressure was applied to Ottawa. In the spring of 1880, the half-breed inhabitants of Manitoba Village, Lake Manitoba, North-West Territories, signed a petition which contains these words:

"And whereas the half-breed heads of families, and the children of the same, born in or resident in the Territories, previously to 15th July, 1870, have not yet had their claims to equal rights and privileges with their brethren in the Province of Manitoba, investigated as is provided for by sub-section 'E' of clause 125, 42 Vic., Chap. 31; and whereas the continued delay in ascertaining and investigating said claims, is creating great and general dissatisfaction throughout the Territories, we your petitioners do humbly pray that you will cause a commission to be issued at an early date to enquire into and confirm the said claims, not only with regard to scrip and allotments of lands as provided for in Manitoba, but moreover to confirm the titles of lands occupied by or purchased by parties from occupants of claims taken previously to the transfer of the Territories to the Dominion of Canada."

On the 10th of May, 1880, the Deputy Superintendent General acknowledges that petition, and states that it will be duly laid before the Minister for consideration. It was under consideration until 1885. On the 23rd of February, 1880, there was a meeting at Duck Lake to which I adverted a few days ago, called by Father André to protest against the notion of abolishing the territorial government; and in his speech, as reported in the newspapers, Father André said:

"Before long this together with several other settlements, would be entitled to representation in the council at Battleford. Then the council would be in a better position to speak in the name of the people, to press their wants and remedy their grievances at Ottawa."

Showing that they had even then wants and grievances, in the opinion of the speaker, which required pressing, and in respect of which they valued even that imperfect and rudimentary system of representation, under which they hoped soon to have a member in that district. On the same occasion, another of the speakers, Mr. Abraham Montour, said:

"Several other petitions had already been forwarded to Ottawa, setting forth the rights and certain wants of the half-breed element throughout the territory, and the action of the Government was still to be learned. He feared the present petition would receive similar treatment."

So that there was even then complaint of the neglect of petitions which were forwarded to Ottawa. On the 19th of May, 1880, Mr. Thomas McKay, I believe a very respected resident of Prince Albert, transmitted to the Minister of the Interior a petition in this letter:

"I herewith forward you petition from the half-breeds of Edmonton and Prince Albert, North-West Territories. As we have no representative for the North-West Territories through whom we could make our wants known, the petition is forwarded to you, trusting it shall receive your early and special attention."

The petition is signed by 102 names, and, amongst other things, it contains these statements:

"And whereas the half-breed heads of families, and the children of the same, born or resident in the Territories previously to July 15th, 1870, have not yet had their claims to equal rights and privileges with their brethren in the Province of Manitoba, investigated, as is justly due to them, and as is provided for by sub-section 'E' of clause 125, 42 Victoria, Chapter 31; and whereas the continued delay in ascertaining and investigating said claims, is creating great and general dissatisfaction throughout the Territories; we your petitioners do humbly pray that you will cause a commission to be issued at an early date to enquire into and confirm the said claims, not only with regard to scrip, and allotments of land as provided for in Manitoba, but, moreover, to confirm the titles to land occupied by or purchased by parties from occupants of claims taken previously to the transfer of the Territories to the Dominion of Canada."

On the 10th of July, 1880, Mr. McKay's letter was acknowledged, and he was informed that it would receive due consideration on the return of the Minister from England. It was under consideration till 1885. I come to the year 1881; nothing was done in the year 1881, but the pressure went on. In the summer of 1881, there was a petition to the Governor General from the half-breeds of Qu'Appelle, with 112 signatures containing these statements:

"That owing to their being temporarily absent from the now Province of Manitoba, at the time of the transfer of the said Province and the North-West Territories to the Dominion of Canada, they have been deprived of, and debarred from, several advantages which were accorded to their confrères who were residents in the Province of Manitoba at the time of the aforesaid transfer, and that your petitioners are of opinion that they have been unjustly treated, as their conduct and actions at the time referred to deserve the kind consideration of the Government. Therefore your petitioners humbly pray that they be dealt with and treated similar to the half-breeds of Manitoba, and the Government will grant scrip to the heads of families and grants of land to the children of the heads of families in the North-West Territories, in like proportion as was granted to half-breeds and old settlers in the Province of Manitoba."

That petition was acknowledged on the 20th of September, 1881, by direction of the Minister of the Interior, and the parties were informed that the petition would be duly considered. It was considered up to 1885. On the 7th of June, 1881, the district of Lorne having in the meantime acquired representation in the North-West Council, a memorial was presented to that council by Mr. Lawrence Clarke, member for Lorne, in these words:

"The undersigned has the honor to represent—

"That a feeling of dissatisfaction and discontent exists among the half-breed element of the North-West Territories.

"That such feeling has arisen from what these half-breeds consider a disregard of their rights, and in the opinion of many whose standing in the country gives such an opinion weight, has, to some extent at least, increased the difficulties encountered by the Dominion Government in their dealings with the Indians, between whom and the whites the half-breeds form a distinct class, possessing, as a rule, great influence over the Indians.

"That the half-breeds have always been recognised as possessing rights in the same soil, subject to which the Dominion accepted the transfer of the Territories; and while ample provision has been made for those resident in Manitoba, on the 15th July, 1870, nothing has been done towards extinguishing that portion of the Indian title to lands and territories outside the Province of Manitoba, as originally formed by the Act of 1870.

"The undersigned further draws attention to the fact, that, by law, the half-breeds are excluded from the benefit conferred upon the Indians.

"That the undersigned has been given to understand several petitions from various quarters have been presented to the Dominion Government on the subject of the half-breeds, particularly referred to, but no notice taken thereof.

"That the undersigned knows that a considerable portion of these half-breeds were and are still residents of the electoral districts of Lorne, and feels it his duty as the electoral representative of that district, to bring under notice, their grievances, in the hope that some action may

be taken at an early day, towards removing what seems to be just cause or complaint.

"The undersigned recommends that through your honor in council the attention of His Excellency be respectfully drawn to the subject, and he be memorialised to direct the attention of his Ministers to the position of the half-breeds who at the transfer to Canada, were and still are residents of the North-West Territories, and have not become parties to Indian treaties, and the taking of such steps as may lead to a speedy adjustment of the grievances they labor under."

On the 14th of June, 1881, the Lieutenant Governor transmitted a copy of this memorial to the Government, adding:

"I was requested by a resolution in council, passed on the 10th inst., to transmit copies thereof to be laid before His Excellency the Governor General, and to express the hope that His Excellency may be pleased to draw the attention of his Ministers to the grievances complained of.

"I trust you will have the goodness, at an early day, to bring these subjects to which these memorials refer, under the consideration of His Excellency the Governor General."

On receipt of these papers, it seems from the papers which were brought down, that the Deputy Minister felt it needful to make another effort, and he made up a file which contained his memorandum of December, 1878, the letter of Archbishop Taché, the letter of Bishop McLean, the letter of Bishop Macrae, the letter of Governor Laird, the letters of Colonel Richardson, the memorial of Mr. Clarke, and the letter of Governor Laird, which I have just read, and he laid it before Sir David Macpherson, then Acting Minister of Interior, with this memorandum:

"The undersigned submits for the information of the Acting Minister the file herewith on the subject of the claims preferred by the half-breeds of the North-West Territories to lands or scrip following upon the grants in this behalf made to the half-breeds of Manitoba."

It is clear, even from that memorandum and its submission at that date, that up to that time no progress had been made in the solution of the question since the period of the passage of the Act, and it was then laid before the Minister for further consideration. It remained under consideration until the year 1885. On the 4th of September, 1881, the Governor General, Lord Lorne, visited the North-West Territories and these regions. A joint address was presented to him by the Hudson Bay Company, the settlers, and the Indians, on the Saskatchewan, and in reply he used this language:

"In cementing the friendship which, thank God, has reigned between the white and the red man, the Metis has been the valued confidant as he is the brother of both. He has aided in the perfect understanding which exists."

Thus was evidenced the opinion of the executive of the country, as to the importance of the half-breed element, in confirmation of the correspondence I have already read, as to the need of preserving a good understanding between the white and the half-breed with a view to the maintenance of good relations with the Indians. But instead of those good terms being maintained, the half-breeds' petitions were disregarded, he was not vouchsafed a reply, he was despised, and neglected, and he became, as Archbishop Taché indicated in his letter he might become, a scourge instead of a help. On the 8th of October, 1881, there was a meeting at Prince Albert, largely attended by persons representing the entire district of Lorne, who passed a series of resolutions, of which the third is as follows:—

"Whereas the Indian title in this district or territory has not become extinct, and the old settlers and half-breed population of Manitoba were granted scrip in commutation of such title, and such allowances has not been made to those resident in this territory, resolved that the Minister of the Interior be requested to grant such scrip to such settlers, thus placing them on an equal footing with their confrères in Manitoba."

These resolutions were ordered to be presented by Mr. Lawrence Clarke, the member for the district, and he was directed to obtain a reply. From the correspondence it appears that he visited Ottawa, and he received a letter after that visit, dated the 22nd of November, 1881, in which, by the direction of the Minister, the Deputy acknowledges the receipt of the memorial and resolutions of the Prince Albert meeting, and says:

"Resolution No. 3.—As by treaty with the Indians their title to any portion of the territory included within the district of Lorne has been extinguished, this resolution would need explanation."

It is a very extraordinary thing that this subject should have so little penetrated the brains of the Department up to that time that they were able to seize on the suggestion that the Indian title had been extinguished as an excuse, when it was perfectly clear to the most ordinary mind that it was the share of the half-breeds in the Indian title that had not been extinguished which formed the basis of the resolution.

"In closing, I am to say that the Minister will cause enquiry to be made through his own officers with reference to the several subjects of these resolutions, and will on their report have such action taken in the premises as may be in accordance with law and necessary."

On the 25th of January, 1882, Mr. Clarke, acknowledged the receipt of this letter, and dealing with resolution No. 3 he answers as follows:—

"I would respectfully submit that the Indian title no doubt has been extinguished, but evidently not that of the half-breed residents of the North-West Territories. The Government of the Dominion of Canada have repeatedly acknowledged the right in the soil of the half-breed inhabitants as is proved."

He then proceeds to cite in detail the Act of 1870, to which I have referred, the Act of 1874, the Act of 1876, the Act of 1877, and the Act of 1879, citing the appropriate clauses in each case to prove his contention; and he adds:

"It will be seen therefore that from the first enactment in 1870 to the last in 1879, the rights in the soil of the half-breed have been recognised by the Government, and provision made for the extinguishment of their title. A very strong memorial on this subject was laid before the North-West Council at its last meeting in June, 1881, and a resolution adopted by that body that the memorial should be remitted to the Governor General of Canada, with a recommendation that His Excellency would be pleased to draw the attention of his Ministers to grievance complained of."

On the 14th of April, 1882, the Deputy Minister acknowledges the receipt of the letter of Mr. Clarke, and says:

"The other points raised in your letter"—

Which are the points relating to half-breeds—

"are reserved for the Minister's special consideration."

They received that consideration in 1885. Now, I come to the year 1882. The report of the Minister of the Interior was presented on the 15th February, 1882, and it is the only document which indicates that any step had been taken in the matter:

"The condition of the half-breed population of the Territories, and the claims which have been preferred on their behalf to be dealt with somewhat similarly to those of the half-breeds of the Red River, have been receiving careful consideration, with a view to meeting them reasonably."

But nothing appears to have been done; the consideration appears to have been fruitless. If there were any notions formed, they did not refer to the matured condition of plans or schemes; no report was made by the Minister to Council; no action was taken whatever. In the month of October, 1882, and for several months afterwards, Bishop Grandin, who is the Bishop within whose diocese these parts are, was at Ottawa, on various matters relating to his diocese. I have little doubt, from what I have read and seen, that with reference to that protracted mission of Bishop Grandin there are papers; but I have not had access to those papers, and no papers whatever have been brought down by the Government relative to Bishop Grandin's mission, his petitions, or the results. But besides attending to his own special business, as to which the Government has left us wholly in the dark—if indeed there be, as I believe there to be, papers which would throw light upon it—Bishop Grandin, who certainly got some concessions, who certainly was promised a written reply, which written reply I am not sure he ever received, gave, I believe, warnings to the Government as to the impending trouble in consequence of the delays, and I charge that either then or

Mr. BLAKE.

earlier or later, Bishop Grandin made applications and representations, and received promises; and I will give the proof of that now. In an address which he made to a large assemblage of half-breeds at St. Laurent on the 5th of February, 1884, as reported in *Le Manitoba*, he used these words:

"As to the other propositions, I have busied myself already for a long time with these in your special interest. I have put upon the Federal Government all possible pressure to obtain justice; I have even obtained promises which I believed official, but which I have the pain of seeing to-day forgotten. I have felt the same discontent, that you also have felt, and I have not failed to complain upon the subject in high quarters."

Where are the papers? In the month of October, 1882, the surveyors of the Dominion Government were at St. Albert, which, I believe, is the headquarters of the diocese. They were about to engage in a survey on the ordinary general principle of the lands in that neighborhood. They gave satisfactory explanations to Father Leduc as to the purpose of that survey, and as to its being followed in the course of a few days by a special survey of the recognised holdings on the river lot system. But later on fresh orders from Ottawa came, under which these special surveyors who had commenced their work were stopped. Excitement ensued; a public meeting was held, and Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney were appointed delegates to Ottawa. That poor population raised \$600 in cash to pay their expenses; \$100 more was raised on their way down to Fort Saskatchewan. Their demands were reduced to writing, and among those demands was one for the settlement of these Indian title claims. That demand was presented by the delegates to the Government at Ottawa, but it has not been brought down; it is not among the papers. They started on their journey; they were 24 days travelling to Qu'Appelle Station; they reached Ottawa; there were long communications, in which intervened the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Royal), Sir David Macpherson, the hon. Minister of Public Works, and the First Minister himself. Promises were made; they asked for writings; the Minister replied to them: "Give a written memorandum and you shall have a written response." They gave written papers into the hands of the Minister, but they are not brought down. Amongst them, in March, 1883, was a memorandum signed by Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney, and it contains this paragraph:

"The inhabitants of St. Albert are for the most part French or English half-breeds, born in the North-West Territories or Manitoba. Before the transfer they were the natural joint possessors of the soil with the Indians. A treaty has been concluded with the latter for the extinction of their rights, but the half-breeds of the Territories have not yet received any compensation, notwithstanding they are on the same footing of right, in fact, with those of Manitoba. They demand then, by the intervention of their delegates to Ottawa, that the Act of Manitoba relative to the rights of the half-breeds and their children born before the transfer be extended to the North-West Territories."

They have received answers, but the answers are not brought down. I believe the answer with reference to this particular claim, which was not the special claim, which was the foundation of their mission, was that the question of this particular right of the half-breeds at that very moment occupied the attention of Parliament. It is true there were two ways in which it might be said to have occupied the attention of Parliament. One was because there was a motion before the House during the Session, made by myself, for the petitions of the people of St. Albert, which embraced this question; the other was that on that occasion a Consolidated Dominion Lands Act was passed, although no change was made in the Act of 1879 authorising the Government to deal with the question. I know of no other way in no extent to which it could be said that particular question was engaging the attention of Parliament than what I have said. But, notwithstanding these delegations, nothing was done in 1882, and the same observation applies to 1883. Early in the year 1883, in fact

during the beginning of 1882-83, a petition was circulated among the citizens of Prince Albert to the House of Commons, and it was presented on the 20th March of that year, bearing the signatures of 394 settlers. It contains this paragraph :

" Whereas there are many half-breeds in this locality and other parts of the North-West Territory who have never taken the treaty, and who were not in Manitoba at the time the census in 1870 was taken, in consequence thereof have not participated in the scrip issued to the half-breeds in that Province."

And this prayer :

" That those half-breeds in the North-West Territory, who have not participated in the scrip issued to the half-breeds in Manitoba may have the same issued to them, thus placing them on the same basis as their brethren in that Province."

In 1883, it seems, Louis Riel visited his old haunts in Manitoba, and became the subject of newspaper comments. On the 9th October, 1883, the North-West Council renewed its application to the Government in this regard. It had done it in 1878; it had done it in 1881; and it did it in 1883:

" Your memorialists further pray that those half-breeds in the Territories who have not participated in the arrangement to extinguish the half-breed claim in Manitoba should enjoy the same rights as accorded half-breeds in that Province."

You will observe that the council had recognised that the time for any other arrangement had now passed; that what-ever might have been done to make different arrangements with the half-breeds in the earlier days, when their condition was different, before so much delay and neglect had taken place, could be done no longer; and their suggestion to the authorities, based upon the suggestion of the people there, was that the half-breeds in the North-West Territories should be given the same rights as those in Manitoba had been given. It had come to that at last, after three or four years of suggestion and unavailing pressure. On the 18th October, 1883, the Privy Council referred that memorial to the President of the Council and the Minister of the Interior for action; they had it under consideration until 1885. By that time, the agitation had got high on various questions. There was a mass meeting, on the 17th October, at Prince Albert, of the inhabitants of Prince Albert and the neighbourhood. There were resolutions passed and speeches delivered, and these resolutions were ordered to be transmitted by the secretary of the meeting to the Minister, but they have not been brought down. Amongst these was a resolution endorsing the petition of the council of the North-West Territories for a recognition of the right of the half-breeds in respect of the Indian title as in Manitoba. On the 21st of January, 1884, a meeting was held of the settlers of St. Catharine's parish to discuss some of their grievances. A committee consisting of W. Kennedy, J. Isbister and W. Swain was appointed to draw up a petition to the Government, setting forth the grievances the people were laboring under in regard to land matters, and praying for redress, and to co-operate with other committees which might be formed, and to wait on Inspector Pearce and ask him to forward the petition to the Government. That petition has not been brought down. It embraced other matters with reference to the lands, but it also embraced, I conceive, a reference to this matter; and my reason for thinking so is because there was a series of meetings held on the same lines, and I find it expressly stated in the resolutions adopted at another meeting. At a meeting in the parish of St. Catharine's, held the 21st of January, 1884, Mr. Kennedy moved, seconded by Mr. J. Anderson, and it was resolved :

" That the half-breed people of the North-West Territories are unjustly treated in not having the same privileges as regards land grants and scrip extended to them, which have been enjoyed by their brethren in Manitoba, and pledging the meeting to make its best endeavors to have the injustice redressed."

But no petition founded on that resolution has been brought down. At Lindsay school-house, Red Deer Hill, in the same month, a meeting was held and the resolution, passed at St.

Catharines, was endorsed and a committee appointed to draw up a petition; but no indication of the existence of that paper is brought down. On the 28th of January, 1884, a meeting of settlers was held at Halero settlement on the South Branch, at which the resolutions of St. Catharines and Lindsay were read and adopted. Mr. A. Spence and Mr. M. Corestine were appointed a committee to draw up a memorial to the Government, but no such memorial appears in the papers brought down. Mr. J. Jackson was appointed to obtain the co-operation of the French settlement in carrying out the resolutions passed at the various meetings, and hopes were expressed that the agitation would increase. The same winter there was a meeting at the Hudson Bay store, South Branch, which was attended by Mr. Macdowall, who was the member for that district, having succeeded Mr. Clark. The grievances were discussed, and much was expected of the coming Session of Parliament. On the 26th of February, 1884, a public meeting was held at Colleston school house. Mr. Macdowall, member for Lorne, spoke; he took up the memorandum of North-West Council in reference to settlers grievances and expressed his confidence in the Minister of the Interior, and thought that the grievances stated in the memorial would be redressed. A series of resolutions were adopted including this one :

" That the half-breeds and natives of the Territories are entitled to the same treatment as their more favored brethren in Manitoba receive."

No indication of that is brought down. On the 27th March, 1884, in this House, the special allusion to the affairs of the North-West which took place for the purpose of debate at any rate, was made. I had discussed in general terms the discontent existing in that region on the Address, and on the 27th of March my hon. friend the member for Huron (Mr. Cameron) on the motion to go into Committee of Supply, made a motion in amendment, and made a speech which contains this language :

" I have spoken to you of the Province of Manitoba and the farmers of that Province, but we must recollect that there is another representative body in the North-West, a body of equal, perhaps of greater importance—a body that rules over an area of 20,000 square miles, with a population estimated at from 20,000 to 150,000 people, a body which has sovereign power in the limits given to it by the constitution under which it has its existence. I refer to the North-West Council. They, too, in solemn council assembled, drew up a list of the grievances of which the North-West Territories had to complain. These grievances were sixteen in number—sixteen different grounds of complaint—and all these grounds of complaint have an importance and a significance well worthy the consideration of those who are now at the head of the affairs in this country. I do not propose dealing with those grievances at any considerable length; I propose only referring, to one or two of them; but in dealing with any of these grievances we ought to bear in mind that the importance to be attached to a protest of misgovernment, of bad policy, depends very largely on the source whence the protest comes. The first question that naturally arises is : Do the people who complain know whereof they speak? Are they conversant with the position and the circumstances of the country? Do they appreciate thoroughly the trials and the difficulties connected with pioneer settlement? And can they fully appreciate the errors of judgment or policy committed by the Administration in the great North-West? Are they free to give an honest and an unbiased judgment on the question on which they undertook to pronounce? If they are the friends of the Government, they surely cannot desire to embarrass the Government, and one cannot help coming to the conclusion that there must be some foundation for their complaints. We all know perfectly well that at least four-fifths of the North-West Council are the friends of the Government. Now, let us see what those friends of the Government in the North-West complain of."

And he read their complaint, which contains this clause :

" Your memorialists further pray that those half-breeds in the Territories who have not participated in the arrangement to extinguish the half-breed claims in Manitoba should enjoy the same rights as accorded half-breeds in that Province."

And then a claim for further surveys and river lot surveys. He adds :

" The demands to which I have referred, made by Manitoba and the North-West Council, are of a not unimportant character. They involve very grave consideration. Hon. members acquainted with the country will admit that they affect the growth and prosperity of the whole of

our western region. Their admission will to a large extent inspire hope and confidence in the minds of the settlers who have gone to make homes in the North-West, and the refusal of those demands—reasonable demands, at any rate—will, in my judgment, imperil the very existence of the Province and of the Territory; and I claim, also, that the refusal will at least check the growth and prosperity of the Territory, and to some extent, I believe, it will weaken the ties which bind Manitoba and the Territories to the Dominion of Canada. I do not say that all the demands made by the Province or by the Territories are all fair and reasonable, I do not pretend to say that the claims made are all fair and reasonable; but I say that every claim advanced by the Province of Manitoba, and every ground of complaint against the policy of the Dominion Government made by the North-West Territories, deserve at the very least, at the hands of the Government, a fair consideration. If those claims are fair and reasonable they should be met promptly, they should be discussed promptly, they should be considered promptly, and if fair and honest claims they should be considered by the Government promptly."

And he moved :

"This House do resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider of the condition, complaints and demands of Manitoba and the North-West Territories with a view to devise means for remedying any well-founded grievances and complying with any reasonable demands."

But unhappily his motion was rejected. In the spring of 1884 the agitation went on, and grievances and complaints were the talk of the people of all this district. In May, 1884, it is reported in the local paper :

"Meetings of the settlers have been held in different places lately, in fact since last winter, discussing their grievances. Last Tuesday a meeting of delegates was held in the Pocha school-house. It was a very large one, all parts being represented. They seem to be fully alive to the fact that farmers' interests are all alike and that union is strength. A working committee has been formed and a list of their grievances drawn out, among which may be mentioned—just representation, the half-breeds of the North-West to receive the same as those of Manitoba, no 80 acres homesteads, and no timber dues. A good deal of feeling exists on account of all officers in the North-West being filled with people from the eastern Provinces, notably Indian instructors. The natives here know the Indian nature much better than strangers can do; besides, the instructors they have sent know nothing about farming and need instruction themselves. Such is the feeling prevalent here."

Then in the same month of May :

"A meeting composed of French and English half-breeds was held at Lindsay school house on Tuesday last; the object seems to be for both parties to agree on a set of resolutions which have been passed at previous meetings, said resolutions embodying grievances complained of by said French and English half-breeds. The substance of the resolutions being the same as was agitated last winter with the addition of two, namely, one protesting against the participation of the Hudson Bay Company in any land in the country and the other in regard to sending a deputation to Louis Riel. Objection was made by the English half-breeds, and, after some sharp discussion in which the Chairman, Mr. Andrew Spence, criticised the English side, in which he said it was his opinion that some of them thought themselves too wise, *crois*, a set of fools, the whole thing was left to a committee, who after some time adopted all the resolutions as presented by the French. It seems to be the mind of the meeting to invite Louis Riel into the country instead of leaving to send out of it to consult him re matters concerning the negotiating for the transfer of Manitoba and the North-West Territories into the Union. What the aim of all these meetings is very few seem to know, if any do, but, as far as stated in the resolutions, it is all well enough to set forth grievances of which not only the half-breeds but Canadians from Ontario as well join, one of the latter taking the lead in opening his purse when subscriptions were called for, for defraying the expense of the delegation to Riel. The delegation is composed of four members of the committee—Messrs James Isbister and M. Dumas for the English, the French members have escaped the memory of your correspondent."

In the same month the same newspapers, speaking generally of the rights of the Territories, spoke editorially as follows :—

"We have every reason to believe that the half-breeds have only been restrained hitherto from very active measures to enforce redress of these and other grievances peculiarly their own, by a doubt as to whether they carried with them the sympathy of the rest of the population. But as they are now fully confident of this, they do not intend to tamely submit much longer. The Government must remember that to the numerical strength of this party must be added the power at any moment to stir into a flame the slumbering embers of discontent smouldering in the breasts of our Indians."

I have now reached the period in the history of this affair when Louis Riel was to be invited and to arrive, and it is therefore necessary to trace the condition of affairs in a

more general sense than that in which I have been endeavoring to do it heretofore. I have to trace the progress of the particular claim of which I have been speaking, the progress of the agitation, the warnings and the knowledge of the Government, and the course of events down to the imminence of the outbreak, and then to find out what the Government did and when they did anything in this particular claim. I have said that this was not the only grievance. I have referred to the questions of the land and several other questions which were at the same time agitating the people, and to which I intend particularly to allude, but there were also of course other things which tended to embitter the minds of many of the settlers. There were great disappointments resulting from change in the railway route, delays in branch railways, some failures in crops, hard times generally, the alleged monopoly by the Hudson Bay Company of contracts, and very serious apprehensions in the minds of the people of Indian troubles. And these various sticks helped to form the materials for a pretty big fire, and that fire was now about to be kindled so far as agitation could kindle it. I maintain, touching very lightly upon these topics at any time, that it is yet necessary to make this brief allusion to them, because at this moment I conceive the Government was called on to deal with this case, in view of a new and very serious juncture. The question had reached such a pitch that the inhabitants had actually determined to send for Louis Riel. The influence of Louis Riel upon them was known to the Government. The First Minister has described it in his place in this House. He had pointed out, that he was their El Mahdi, their Stuart, their La Rochejaquelin, their leader of the lost cause; a man of unbounded, unlimited influence. And he has pointed out, also, the position which he had formerly occupied; and surely an invitation to such an one to come amongst them an invitation based, as this was, upon his former acts and achievements in the Province of Manitoba, was a striking and startling circumstance, and ought to have led the Government to the decision that any substantial grievances which really existed, any causes of complaints of long standing, should be adjusted without further delay, so as to give no substantial cause for disaffection, for agitation, for disturbance, for discontent; so as to remove all that could be removed, conscious, as they must have been, if they heeded the circumstances of the case, that even a complete removal at that stage would leave some soreness and irritation remaining; and knowing, as they must have known if they had properly studied the lessons of history, that the result of such a state of things as I have depicted, is that to the original grievances and complaints which had a solid foundation, there are always added, by those who agitate, new claims, less tenable, claims exaggerated, claims which the people are persuaded to demand and adhere to, just because of the discontented mind in which they had been plunged by the denial of justice, by the refusal of right, by neglect, contumely and contempt. Now, Sir, just at this very time, in June, 1884, there were other conjuncions of a serious character; another warning was given. In June, 1884, it was that the very serious Poundmaker disturbance occurred at Battleford; and if you look at the papers of that date, at the Winnipeg Times of that month, you will find an account of that disturbance, a disturbance which recalls, in many of its aspects, some of the late transactions at Battleford, a disturbance under which the people were obliged to place themselves in a state of siege, to vacate their houses, to take refuge in fortified posts, and prepare to resist what they believed to be an organised Indian attack. Nor was that the only case in which the Indian showed at that time a disposition to create disturbance and difficulty. The Government was well aware of that, and for proof I need advert to no more than the hon. gentleman's

poor

peech upon this subject at an early period of the Session, when he himself described the condition of the Indian population, and their mental mood and attitude at that time. Just before this time, the Deputy Minister of the Department was at Calgary, I observe, on his return from the mountains, and on the same day on which he was there a telegram reached that very point showing the state of affairs. In a word, I may say, that every storm drum was up at that time, that everything indicated, both from the point of view of the half-breeds and of the Indians, that whatever apathy may have existed before, whatever neglect may have existed before, whatever indifference had existed before, were causes for redoubled energy, for redoubled promptness, for enhanced liberality of treatment, in order to the avoidance of the crisis due to that more formidable agitation which was soon to supervene. Well, Sir, in the month of June, 1884, a delegation consisting of Messrs. Isbister, Dumont, Ouillette and Dumas, were appointed by a committee, and several resolutions were passed by the meeting which appointed that committee; but I have not been able to find those resolutions, so that I am not able to present them to the House as I would have desired. The delegates walked 700 miles into Montana to meet Riel, and they found him. They presented their papers to him, and they obtained from him a reply. He says:

"GENTLEMEN:—You have travelled more than 700 miles from the Saskatchewan country across the international line, to make me a visit. The communities in the midst of which you live have sent you as their delegates to ask my advice on various difficulties which have rendered the British North-West unhappy under the administration of the Ottawa Government. Moreover, you invite me to go and stay amongst you, your hope being that I, for one, could help to better, in some respects, your condition. Cordial and pressing is your invitation; you want me and my family to accompany you; I am at liberty to excuse myself, and say no; yet you are waiting for me; so that I have only to get ready, and your letters of delegation assure me that a friendly welcome awaits me in the midst of those who sent you.

"Gentlemen, your personal visit does me honor and causes great pleasure; but on account of its representative character your coming to me has the appearance of a remarkable circumstance which I record as one of the gratifications of my life—an event which my family will remember, and I pray to God that my assistance will prove so successful to you as to render this event a blessing amongst the many blessings of this, my 40th year. To be frank is the shortest. I doubt whether my advice given to you on this soil concerning affairs in Canadian territories, could cross the border and retain any influence. But here is another view of the matter: I am entitled, according to the 31st and 32nd clauses of the Manitoba Treaty, to land, of which the Canadian Government have directly or indirectly deprived me, and my claim to which is valid notwithstanding the fact that I have become an American citizen. Considering, then, that my interests are identical with yours, I accept your very kind invitation, and will go and spend some months amongst you, in the hope that by petitioning the Government we will obtain the redress of all our grievances.

"Montana has a population of which the native half-breed element constitutes a considerable portion, and if we include those white men who, through being connected by marriage, or in other ways, have a personal interest in their welfare, I believe that this element is a pretty strong one. I am just getting acquainted with them, and I am one of those who would like to unite and direct its vote for the furtherance of their best interests; moreover, I have made friends and acquaintances amongst whom I like to live. I go with you, but I come back in September.

"I have the honor to be, gentlemen delegates,

"Your humble servant,

"LOUIS RIEL."

And he accompanied the delegates to the Saskatchewan. There is a correspondence of the influential French paper of the North-West, *Le Manitoba*, which I believe is under the proprietorship of M. de la Rivière, a member of the Manitoba Government, I think, and with which it is supposed my hon. friend opposite, the member for Provencher, sometimes had—perhaps I may say sometimes has—a little to do with. *Le Manitoba* thus announced the arrival of Riel:

"I learned yesterday that Mr. Louis Riel was to go to-day to St. Laurent. You are aware, perhaps, that after the meetings of this spring, a delegation of the English and French Metis departed to visit the ex-President of the Provisional Government of Red River, then in Montana, to inform him of the needs of those of his fellow half-breeds—because he is a Metis—and beg him to come among them. It appears that the delegation has succeeded, at least to this degree; it is said that Mr. Riel is

coming with his family. O, if he would only have the happy idea to remain permanently amongst us! That man only can do good to his fellow countrymen, and he is the only one who can unite them all on any question. His name is great among the Metis, English or French; and there is no doubt that his influence, if well directed, will be of immense advantage to them. Yesterday the people were to assemble in crowds to meet him."

Then, on 10th July, the correspondent writes in the same paper:

"The members of the committee forming the delegation sent to Mr. Riel, and appointed in the month of May last, had a meeting on the 8th inst. at Chas. Nolin's, to receive the report of this delegation. Herewith is the report that the delegates presented to the committee, which was read by the secretary; and also the answer from Mr. Riel:

"To Messrs. the members of the committee in charge of the seven resolutions adopted by the population of the Saskatchewan.

"WM. CROMARTIE, President.
"LOUIS SCHMIDT, Secretary."

A number of statements are then made, which are immaterial, and the report goes on to say:

"After having made known to him the object of our mission, we presented to him our credentials and the six resolutions that we were to consider together, and also the document in which, in the name of the public, you invited him to come to the North-West. We asked him to come with us, if he could, and help us. This interview took place on the 4th of June. Mr. Riel read our papers and asked twenty-four hours to consider and give us an answer.

"The humble condition of his lodging made us think of the numerous occasions he had of becoming rich at the time he had the power in his hands. We recalled his firm attitude in the midst of thousands of dangers as meriting the confidence of his fellow countrymen. We knew what he had done for Manitoba and the North-West, and the little advantages he had personally received from the same. And returning from this long journey of nearly 1,400 miles, we feel twice as much confidence in that man whom we have been visiting in a foreign land."

"Mr. Riel comes here to help us, without any pretension. He hopes that before long the people of the North-West will be perfectly united, and that the Government will very soon do justice to all.

"The speeches of Mr. Riel inspire us with the greatest confidence, because his instructions are to help us; but while helping us he does not want, in the slightest degree, to create needless difficulties to the Government:

"We have the honor to be, gentlemen, your most humble servants and delegates,

"GABRIEL DUMONT,
"JAMES ISBISTER,
"MOISE OUILLETTE,
"MICHEL DUMAS."

The correspondent goes on to give the answer of Louis Riel, which I have already read. This same influential newspaper, on 17th of July, wrote, editorially, upon the North-West, in these words:

"For several months we have been receiving letters from the North-West which inform us of the agitation that is going on there.

"When the Act creating the Province of Manitoba was introduced in Ottawa, in 1870, the Federal Government, after long conference with the Rev. Father Ritchot, Judge Black and Mr. Scott, the three delegates of the colony of Assiniboina, had inserted in that measure some just and equitable provisions guaranteeing to the inhabitants of the colony the confirmation of the titles of the lands possessed by them up to 15th July, 1870. Another clause of the same Act gave a land grant of 1,400,000 acres to the half-breed children for the extinction of their rights as first proprietors of the country. Later on, by another Act, each head of a family received a land grant of 160 acres for the extinction of the same right. But all these provisions were made only in favor of the half-breeds living, at the date of the 15th July, 1870, on the territory comprised in the limits of the Province then created, and those of the half-breeds who were then and are still in the North-West never could participate in any manner in that act of justice on the part of the Federal Government."

The article proceeds to quote the resolution of the North-West Council of 1878, and the Act of Parliament of 1883, and it goes on to say:

"The great difficulty that the half-breeds meet with is, first, the obtaining a survey of their lands according to the limits and actual shape of those lands, the delay in the ratification of their titles, and the quasi refusal to give them the grant asked for the extinction of their Indian rights. These are to-day the causes of all the discontent. Several petitions have been sent to Ottawa; even delegates have been sent to the capital, at great expense, and yet without result. Is there a population in any of the other Provinces who would not have created a regular revolution if they had been subjected to such treatment? Certainly not.

"To-day meetings are called from all parts; the settlers who, though not being half-breeds, have the interests of the latter at heart, join with

them to demand justice and draw the attention of the Federal Government, who, let it be said, are far less guilty than the heads of the Department and its other officers. Our correspondent in Prince Albert sends us a word on this subject in the letter that we publish to-day; and since then a despatch informs us that a great meeting, composed of new settlers and French and English half-breeds, has been held a few miles from Prince Albert. At this meeting, the despatch says: Mr. Louis Riel spoke in very moderate terms. The Hon. Chas. Nolin, ex-member of the Government and of the Legislature of Manitoba, also spoke at this meeting, as well as Mr. W. S. Jackson. It was resolved to prepare a petition to the Government, asking that justice be done to the parties interested.

"Notwithstanding all the good reasons that our friends of the North-West can allege in support of their demands, notwithstanding all their neglected rights, we hope, we even have the certainty, that they will not be guilty of any act or any threat of violence, which could only be injurious to their cause. On the other hand, how can one avoid blaming the Federal Government, or rather the Department of the Interior, which is the primary cause of all this discontent?"

On 8th July, 1884, the Government received a telegram from Crozier, of the Mounted Police at Battleford:

"Louis Riel arrived at Duck Lake with family, brought in by half-breeds. They brought him in, it is said, as their leader, agitating their rights."

On 15th July Mr. Mathew Ryan, formerly stipendiary magistrate in the Territories, and who had been engaged as commissioner in connection with the enumeration of the half-breeds, wrote a letter, which was published in the Manitoba *Free Press*, from which a few extracts may be read:

"In common with many others, no doubt, I expected that the opening of the Sixth Council of the North-West council would be marked by some reference to the state of disquietude manifest in the half-breed settlements of St. Laurent and adjacent places."

After stating his own official relation to another phase of the question, Mr. Ryan proceeds:

"In the discharge of this duty, I found that a large number of half-breeds had no claim under the Act (that is, the original Manitoba Act), not having been residents of Manitoba at the date of the transfer. I also see that this exclusion caused much discontent, and I did not fail to urge, from time to time, that the proper remedy should be applied."

Mr. Ryan then states the memorandum of the North-West Council of 1878, and the Land Act of 1879, and adds:

"But nothing further has yet been done in the premises. In a letter which I have lately received from a gentleman in a high position in the Territories, it is written: 'For what reasons the Government has not, so-far, done anything in the premises, is a mystery to me. The half-breeds feel that they are slighted, and the feeling of discontent is daily growing amongst them.'"

This letter derives a great portion of its significance from the fact that it was published at the time and became the property of the Government as well as the property of the public. At this time the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Mr. Burgess, was in the North-West, and upon his return, when suffering very severely, I believe, from an unfortunate accident, he was interviewed; but I have reason to believe that, according to his memory, the report of the interview is not correctly stated, and therefore I do not trouble the House with it. I would not refer to it at all, except for the fact that it was the foundation of action by the North-West Council. On 21st July, 1884, the North-West Council, being in session, and having before them the report of the interview with Mr. Burgess, passed a resolution, which is not brought down, but of which I find a copy in one of the newspapers, and have translated it. It was proposed by Mr. Macdowell, representative of Lorne district, comprising the disturbed district, and seconded by Mr. Jackson, of the Qu'Appello district, which contains numerous half-breed letters:

"That this council regret the expressions attributed to the Deputy Minister of the Interior, in an interview with a reporter of the Manitoba *Free Press*, published 17th July, 1884, respecting the half-breed claims. In the absence of more definite information upon this subject, this council desires that it should be understood, notwithstanding that it recognises absolutely the justice of the claims of the Métis of these Territories, so far as concerns the grants of land which they demand,

that the question of the claims of the half-breeds in these Territories be referred for disposition to the Executive."

You will observe, Mr. Speaker, that there was action based upon, and very naturally based upon, the statement attributed to Mr. Burgess. I find, although the Government has not thought fit to bring down that resolution, that the Government replied to it, for I find the following in the Moose Jaw *News*, 30th July:-

"His Honor stated to the council that he had a telegram from Sir John A. Macdonald, to the effect that the Minister of the Interior, on his return from Europe will take into his serious consideration the questions relating to the half-breeds in the North-West Territory."

However, the Government has not thought it worth while to bring down the telegram from Mr. Dowdney, or the response from the First Minister, nor have they brought down any results of that serious consideration which was so promised earlier, at any rate, than the year 1885. On the 27th July, 1884, Mr. Crozier, Superintendent of Police, writes to the Government from Battleford, as follows:-

"I have the honor to inform you that Riel has held meetings at both Prince Albert and Duck Lake. I am informed that his meeting at the first named place was an open one; some little difficulty took place, but was promptly put down."

"At Duck Lake his audience was composed of French half-breeds and Indians. He is said, though I have not official information to that effect, to have told the Indians that they had 'rights' as well as the 'half-breeds,' and that he wished to be the means of having them redressed."

"I am also informed that he expressed a wish to confer with the Indian chiefs. I have already reported"—

But I wish to say that that report has not been brought down—

"that I believe the Indians sympathise with the half-breeds, nor could anything else be expected, being close blood relations and speaking the same language."

"What may be the result of the half-breed agitation, or what effect it may have upon the Indians, of course I cannot foretell. I before said"—

But the letter in which he said so has not been brought down—

"I before said, and still think, precautionary measures should be taken, such measures as will not only prevent turbulent spirits carrying their schemes to an extreme, but prevent both Indians and half-breeds even making an attempt to resist authority or organise for illegal purposes, for these constant 'excitements' must have a most injurious effect upon the country, and among those effects, not the least, a sense of insecurity among settlers."

"I believe now that Big Bear and his followers would have been upon their reserve but for the emissaries of Riel, who, it is said, invited him to meet that person at Duck Lake."

"Certain it is he has gone there, and that after having promised, and received provisions, to go to Fort Pitt, he had proceeded with the camp some distance on the road, but they turned back after hearing from Riel."

"There are very many rumors about as to what Riel has said to the Indians, that, if true, are intending to cause discontent among them as to their present condition."

On the 29th of July, 1884, the correspondent of *Le Manitoba* wrote a letter from Prince Albert, which was published the following month, to this effect:

"The week which has just finished has been very quiet, following always the old proverb: The calm after the storm. The *Times* of Prince Albert, seeing its ill success in its efforts to prejudice the English public opinion against Riel, has lowered its flag and it is holding itself silent. Meanwhile, the national movement continues its progress quietly and peacefully. Committees are being formed in the different parishes of the district, and each one is preparing a list of their grievances, which will be submitted at a general meeting of these committees, and upon which will be based the memorial which will be sent to the Government. The *Herald*, of Battleford, of the 12th July, seems to endeavor to ridicule these peaceable proceedings of the whole population, who desire to have their rights recognised, because Riel is there. It says, for example, that 'if Riel wants to establish a Government in the Saskatchewan, he will find, in his immediate neighborhood, many of his old partisans, and, no doubt, his former secretary, Louis Schmidt, will resign with pleasure his office of assistant clerk at the Land Office, at Prince Albert, to offer his services to his country and to his old master'."

"That deserves a word of answer. First, Mr. Riel has not, so far as I am aware, the intention of forming a Government on the Saskatchewan; but should he desire to do so, you would see coming to act as his secretary, not Mr. Schmidt, but a crowd of aspirants of the school of

poor

the *Herald* itself, who would be but too proud to have employment under Mr. Riel. Mr. Laurie himself, so bending before the authorities, would have come quickly to cringe to him, even if only to obtain the modest position of deputy forest ranger. Now, as to Mr. Schmidt, personally, I do not suppose anybody imagines that in accepting an office from the Government, he has renounced his title as a citizen and a half-breed. He will, no doubt, fulfil diligently and impartially his duties of public employee, but that will not oblige him to conceal his sympathies for those of his nation who have just rights to be recognised. The responsible persons, happily, do not see in the same light as the *Herald* the agitation which is going on in the North-West; and, if they see no ground to fear for the peace of the country, yet they know very well that the unanimous sentiments of a whole population must not be displayed."

Then follows the resolution of the North-West Council, of the 21st July, which I have just read. Meantime, Indian troubles were looming still larger and larger, and detailed reports as to Poundmaker, and other matters of that description, were published in the newspapers. And here I may be permitted to make a brief reference to the defensive and quasi military precautions which were taken by the Government, both as showing a sense of danger and because I believe that the Government is greatly to be blamed in these regards. I have already proved, as I think, the blame which is to be attached to them, with reference to the killing out of the local corps of the North-West, and I might add the great neglect they had shown, also, with reference to the local corps proposed in the Province of Manitoba. I do not touch upon these subjects now. As to the operations of the Mounted Police, the report is admittedly meagre. The hon. gentleman acknowledged that the other day. It is eminently unsatisfactory, in not giving fuller details of their operations; and as to the militia operations, we want, as I have more than once said, some more information than we have yet obtained. The *Winnipeg Sun*, of 25th July, 1884, says:

"Col. Houghton returned last night from a tour of inspection of arms in the Saskatchewan district. As to the corps organised throughout the Territories, they had ceased drilling some time ago. In consequence of the lapse of the three years, the Government, in view of the unsettled state of affairs in the Saskatchewan district, and the probability of an outbreak among the half-breeds at any time, deemed it wise to collect all the arms, as in the event of an uprising they might be used with great advantage against the whites. Corps had been organised at Battleford, Carlton, Prince Albert and Duck Lake, and the arms of each company were found at headquarters. They were taken possession of and handed over to the Mounted Police for safe keeping. Col. Houghton visited Battleford, Carlton and Prince Albert, and personally looked after the work, but he arranged with Capt. Hughes, of Duck Lake, to send in the arms of the company which was organised there.

"The arms were found to be in very good condition, and will doubtless do to distribute again, when other volunteer corps are organised throughout the Territories, which is the intention of the Government. Col. Houghton stated, however, that he had no definite information from the Government on the point. Being asked about the discontent among the half-breeds, the colonel stated they were really in a bad way. Consequent upon the great drought which prevailed all summer, the crops all along the half-breed settlement are almost an entire failure, and starvation stares the poor creatures in the face. Col. Houghton did not have very much conversation with the settlers, but those with whom he did speak informed him of the bad state of affairs existing. They have not been able to procure patents for their lands, and they have other grievances against the Government. Col. Houghton believes if they had their patents they would be appeased, to a certain extent, as by the sale of portion of their land they could keep the wolf from the door. At the meetings which were held, the opinion was expressed that they should receive the same treatment as was afforded the half-breeds in Manitoba."

Then there is further reference to the grievances and it goes on:

"Col. Houghton being asked about the presence of Riel among the settlers, said he did not see the hero of the Red River rebellion, although he was among the natives when he passed down. He was camping on the south fork of the Saskatchewan, and the half-breeds are endeavoring to secure the co-operation of the Indians in the agitation. If they succeed in rousing the latter to action, and a coalition is formed, a serious uprising will be the result."

Now, Sir, I have already proved to this House, from the published report of the Minister of Militia, that Col. Houghton, under his own signature, did send in a special report upon this very mission on which he was interviewed, and upon which he gave this statement to the interviewer.

I charge that that officer reported then imminent danger, the holding of meetings, the urgency of the case, the necessity of taking precautions at once to prevent the outbreak; but his report has not been brought down. In fact, that report is suppressed. On the 26th of July, in an editorial, the *Winnipeg Sun* says:

"It is impossible to understand what the Dominion Government means by refusing to hearken to the complaints of the half-breeds in the Saskatchewan region, and then by sending up the Deputy Adjutant General to disarm them. Does the Government think these well-disposed people would revolt without cause or provocation? If not, why does it not at once set about redressing the grievances that are driving them to such desperation that they are no longer to be trusted with weapons? Col. Houghton, no doubt, discharged his duty in the kindest manner, and the arms were quietly surrendered. But what a commentary on the policy of the Interior Department, that a district containing some of the oldest and best settlers in the country should have to be 'proclaimed'!"

It is the whole North-West which is now proposed to be proclaimed by the Bill before the House. Then, Sir, on the 5th of August, Sergt. Brooks, of the Mounted Police, stationed at Prince Albert, writes as follows:—

"In reporting to you as to what is transpiring here at Prince Albert and vicinity, I would say that since I have been here I have found everything quiet. There is very little talk about Riel. The principal part of the people who seem to agree with him are people who are hard up, and think they must do something to cause a little excitement. I have heard of very few who are in any way well-to-do speak favorably of him. There is no doubt but what all the half-breeds swear by him, and whatever he says is law with them. As near as I can learn, he is advising them all very strongly to remain peaceful. Big Bear is still at Beardy's reserve. Whether he intends to see Riel or not, I do not know."

The rest of the letter does not seem material. On the 8th of August Sergt. Brooks telegraphed as follows:—

"Returned from Duck Lake last night. Big Bear in council with ten other chiefs. Riel has held several private meetings at the south branch, attended by leading half-breeds. He has not seen Big Bear."

On the 14th of August Sergt. Brooks reported as follows:—

"Riel is across the river opposite here, at Batoche's house. He addressed a meeting to-day, as the people were coming from church. From what I can learn, he must have got very excited. One thing he stated was that the Indians' rights should be protected as well as their own. He has not had a meeting with Big Bear, but I am afraid that he has some private way of communicating with him. He is to cross the river to-morrow, and I believe is to remain on this side about a week, as he has asked Tompkins, the Indian farm instructor, to meet him at Duck Lake, for what reason I do not know. There is a man of the name of Jackson here, who came from Prince Albert—he is a brother of the druggist—who seems to be a right-hand man of Riel's. He is with him at present, and has been for some time. He has a great deal to say, and I believe he does more harm than any breed among them. There are a great many people through the country who have what they call grievances, and seem to agree with Riel. Whether they really do or not, is hard to say. I have been speaking to a number of people at Prince Albert, and men who signed the petition for him to go there and speak, simply did it because they thought it would draw the attention of the Government to the place. There is no doubt but that everyone is hard up, and they thought they must do something to draw their attention."

The rest does not appear to be material. On the 21st of August Brooks reported further:

"Both Big Bear and Riel have been in town. The former arrived on the 15th and Riel on the Sunday following. Their being in town caused very little excitement, and people did not seem to pay much attention to them. Riel stayed at Jackson's, the druggist, and before he left he and Lepine held conference with Big Bear, the result of which I have not been able to learn. Riel, of course, claims that he will have nothing to do with the Indians, and Big Bear says he did not come here to see Riel. However, they were at Jackson's house and had a talk, Riel leaving the next day for the south branch, and Big Bear the day after for Battleford—at least, so he said. I have heard it stated on pretty good authority that Riel has given up the idea of going back to Montana, and intends to remain in the Territory, which I think is quite likely, although he has stated to different parties that he would leave for Montana about the 1st September. I will forward returns showing the number of half-breeds and Indians in the vicinity by mail which leaves Duck Lake on Monday next."

The Saskatoon telegraph operator, on the 7th of September, 1884, reported that:

"About 20 Indians, under Black Moon, armed with rifles and swords, rode about the settlement, demanding grub, and threatening to take it if it was not given."

copy

Then, the House will remember the statement of the hon. First Minister as to the Government having thought it prudent, during this season, to arrange with the Hudson Bay Company for the occupation of Fort Carlton by the Mounted Police. We ought, I think, to have had a little fuller information on that. That post appears to have been chosen by the Comptroller of the Mounted Police, and it appears to have been so well chosen that when the rising took place, it was not considered any longer defensible, because the first thing that was done was to evacuate it. But I am dealing now with the conduct of the Government as evidencing a sense of danger, and I find that on the 3rd of September, 1884, the Comptroller of the Mounted Police recommended to the Minister as follows:—

"The undersigned has the honor to submit, for the Minister's consideration, that in view of the possibility of additional Mounted Police being required in the North Saskatchewan district, it is desirable that steps should be taken to secure accommodation for men and horses beyond the capacity of the Mounted Police post at Battleford, and it is suggested that arrangements might be made with the Hudson Bay Company for the use, for police purposes during the coming winter, of their buildings, or a portion thereof at Fort Carlton, which is about 15 miles north-west of Duck Lake, about 55 miles west of Prince Albert and 120 miles east of Battleford."

I have already called the attention of the House, and therefore do not repeat it, to the statement of an interview with Mr. White, and the views of the situation he then expressed; and here I will pass away from the subject of the Mounted Police to a point to which I have drawn the attention of the hon. gentleman more than once, and it seems to me to come fairly within the subject of defensive precautions; I refer to the condition of the 7-pounder mountain guns of the Mounted Police. On the 1st February, 1882, Commissioner Irvine uses this language:

"The carriages and limbers for the 7-pounder guns are fast becoming unserviceable. These carriages were constructed at Fort Walsh some years ago, under the direction of Inspector Neale. Considering the material at that officer's command, the carriages and limbers have proved most successful. I would, however, recommend that new ones be purchased, of the pattern lately approved by the Imperial authorities. A few signal rockets might, with advantage, be supplied us."

That report was on the 1st February, 1882, but nothing at all was done with the carriages and limbers; and on the 1st January, 1883, Commissioner Irvine reported again:

"I would remind you that the carriages and limbers of the 7-pounder mountain guns are fast becoming unserviceable. I recommend that new ones be purchased, of the pattern lately approved by the Imperial authorities."

Well, nothing was done in the year 1883 to secure new carriages and limbers, and on the 1st January, 1884, the commissioner reported as follows:—

"I have previously reported that the carriages and limbers of the 7-pounder guns are virtually unserviceable."

So that it is stated now that they are virtually unserviceable, as one would infer from the previous language used in the mild sense customary in speaking of the condition of a military force.

"—are virtually unserviceable, and last year I recommended that carriages and limbers of the Imperial pattern be purchased. On close enquiry it was ascertained that such purchase would have entailed a very considerable expense. Carriages and limbers suitable for our purposes can be manufactured in this country at much smaller cost than would ensue were a purchase made from England. The supply officer at headquarters has now the required material for manufacture, and I trust that next summer may find us in possession of sufficient skilled labor to make carriages and limbers in this country."

So I find that for three years these carriages and limbers had remained in a practically unserviceable condition; and the result was, that when the time of stress came, when the guns were not to be mere toy guns, for show, but were to be used, these carriages and limbers had not been supplied; and these are the consequences as reported by the Toronto *Mail* correspondent in reference to the fight with Poundmaker at Cut Knife Creek:

Col. Otter had intended advancing right up upon the tepees to the front, but one of the 7-pounders was disabled by the breaking of the gun carriage, and it was not deemed advisable to push on. As a matter of fact, our small arms were not of much use, the two guns being our principal reliance. The Gatling did good work in clearing the groves and clumps, but the moment the enemy dropped down into the coulees it was of little more use than our rifles. The shrapnel of B battery did most of the damage, and the disabling of one of the guns was, under such circumstances, a serious misfortune.

The same correspondent, on the 4th of May, writes, and the *Toronto Mail*, on the 19th May, publishes the following:—

"At last it seemed as though the ammunition of the Indians was being exhausted, and Col. Otter decided on making a rush to the tepees and burning the whole encampment. There were just two courses open to him, namely, either to withdraw his troops or make a grand rush for their camp. But here fate settled the question. The trail of one of the 7-pounders broke as the gun was discharged, rendering it, of course, useless. The other was cracked some time before, and had been strengthened by a piece of 2 inch oak, which was bolted on the lower side. But the constant firing had loosened this, and every time the gun was discharged it jumped out of the trunnion holes. In fact, it was a race between the gun and the gunners. The former jumped back every time it was discharged, and the latter had to follow it and carry it back to its place again. It would have been folly to attempt to destroy the tepees without the guns, and so Col. Otter decided on withdrawing."

And this is the consequence, Sir, of treating for three years the statements that the carriages and limbers of the guns were unserviceable, with silence and inaction—this is the melancholy consequence, that victory was prevented, that defeat became imminent, in consequence of both the guns becoming unserviceable. Now, Sir, there are pieces of information which it would be very good to have, which we have not; and I will, at this stage, collect a few of them, as they deal with the season of 1884, after the arrival of Riel. In the first place, as I have more than once remarked, several Ministers themselves visited the North-West, among them the hon. Minister of Public Works, the Acting Minister of Railways, I suppose, in his capacity as such, and also in his capacity as Minister of Immigration and Agriculture. During the summer the Minister of Marine and Fisheries and the Postmaster General visited the west. The Minister of Public Works was charged, as he himself once declared, by the First Minister, to spy out the land, not like the old spies of the promised land, for the good things therein, but to spy out the land for the grievances. His business was to find out what the complaints were of the people of that country. That was the mission on which he went to the North-West and which he discharged. It is gratifying to know that having, presumably, regard to his own nationality, he had on that mission an opportunity of meeting a portion of the aggrieved class of the population to whom I have been referring, and he dealt with them as I will point out later on. Then there were the deputies. There was the Deputy Minister of the Interior, the Comptroller of the Mounted Police, and that year, or the year before, the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs had gone out there. There were upon the spot numerous persons; there was an *embassie des marchands* in the way of officers. First of all, there was that Lieutenant Governor, of whom the First Minister boasted some years ago that he was a very good judge of men, and a man of long experience, and that he was never more satisfied to an appointment being wise than in this case—that the appointment of Mr. Dewdney had given and would give eminent satisfaction. Then there were the Indian agents, the farm instructors, the Crown land agents, the Crown timber agents, the registrars, the land board, the inspector of colonization companies, the inspector of agencies, the stipendiary magistrates, the mounted police, the militia, the school masters, the North-West Council; and besides these, there were the non-official class of men deeply interested in the prosperity of the country, and to whom hon. gentlemen have frequently and properly appealed for advice, assistance and information, the officers of the Hudson Bay Company and the clergy of the country. Does any one suppose there is not more information as to what was

poor

going on in 1884 than what the Government have brought down? That there is no more than that cannot be credited. But the hon. gentleman put in a saving clause; he said there was more, but it would be dangerous to the givers of it to bring it down. It would hurt the missionaries and officials of the North-West to have it shown among the Indians and half-breeds that they had sympathised with their grievances and asked the Government to redress them. Because those who warned the Government knew how serious was the case; because they urged that some steps should be taken to remedy those grievances, inasmuch as the lives, and safety, and happiness, and comfort of the inhabitants of the Territories were to be imperilled, the hon. gentleman would not bring down these papers; and these persons stand in a position in which their warnings, declarations, suggestions, advice, and information are not brought down because it would be dangerous to their lives to do so? The absence of these papers is dangerous to their honor. There were officers in this neighborhood, besides the officers of the class to which I have referred, a new class of officers. The Government tried its hand at the old-fashioned way of appeasing the leaders of agitation. Louis Schmidt, the secretary of the Riel invitation meeting, was appointed an assistant land agent; Mr. Isbister says in print that he was offered and declined the position of Indian farm instructor; that Mr. Dumais was offered the position of Indian instructor, which he accepted, though we have been unable to obtain information from the Government on that subject; and that Gabriel Dumont was given a ferry license. During that summer, I have reason to believe that amongst the unofficial persons who yet were clothed with great authority and responsibility in this matter, and who communicated with the Government, was Bishop Grandin. I believe he wrote more than once, saying, in substance, that the half-breeds were greatly dissatisfied; that he and his clergy were losing all influence with them; that they were no longer respected; that they were frequently accused by their people of having no real sympathy with the half-breeds and their grievances; that it was said that, on the contrary, the clergy's sympathy was always sure to be with the Government; adding, that unless a prompt settlement of their just claims was effected serious troubles were sure to come soon; and pointing out that the half-breeds being the link between the whites and the Indians, it was important that all cause of dissatisfaction should be removed, as if trouble should arise with the half-breeds it would spread to the Indians, and the consequences would be terrible. I believe this is the substance of the information which was received by the letters that were written. I am positive letters were written, and my reason is because the newspaper I have referred to more than once, and which gave me so much valuable information, contains a letter, dated St. Albert, 24th of April, 1885, from Bishop Grandin to Archbishop Taché, in which he says this:

"Father Lacombe tells me that a copy of certain letters, which I addressed last year to our hon. Government, would be pleasing to you. I will have them copied and send them to you."

The rest of the letter gives a touching account of their troubles. I have therefore proved that Bishop Grandin wrote to the Dominion authorities in the year 1884, and that his letter gave an account of the troubles he and his various missionaries had been involved in, in consequence of the unhappy circumstances prevailing. I have reason to believe, also, from other information, that Archbishop Taché himself wrote, that Mr. Macdowall wrote, that Father André and others wrote, and I can hardly believe otherwise than that Mr. Duck and Mr. Pearce wrote. Then, there was Sheriff Chapleau, who was interviewed in the fall of 1884, and expressed his opinion of the condition of things. It seems to me that the sheriff of the Territory, the officer charged with the administration of justice, and being himself of the French nationality, would surely have taken some steps to point out

to the Government the condition of affairs. I believe Judge Rouleau wrote twice to Mr. Dewdney about the disaffection of the half-breeds, urging prompt redress, and Mr. Dewdney answered that he had forwarded his letters, and urged prompt settlement. In the latter part of 1884 Judge Rouleau wrote to the First Minister himself, directly and strongly on the question. After the July sitting of the North-West Council, Judge Rouleau, Mr. Haytor Reed, and Mr. Forget went to Duck Lake. The ostensible mission of the first two was to select the site for a court, and that of Mr. Forget to inspect ferries and schools; but according to my information, their main object was to ascertain the feeling of the half-breeds on the situation, and certainly, if it was not, it ought to have been, after all the warnings the Government had received. A report of this mission was, I believe, made to Lieutenant Governor Dewdney, and through him to the Government, that there existed considerable dissatisfaction, which might lead to serious consequences, unless promptly remedied, and the views of Bishop Grandin, and probably of Father André and others, were, as I believe, obtained. But none of these papers have been communicated to us. I have also been informed that Mr. Forget has stated, that Mr. Dewdney had repeatedly warned the Government, and could clear himself from the heavy load of responsibility which unquestionably devolved upon him if he did not give any warning. Where are these warnings? Then there are the missing Mounted Police reports, some of which are proved to exist, by the statements I have made, and there is the missing report of Col. Houghton, the existence of which I have proved, and then, in the month of October, Governor Dowdney himself visited St. Albert and various places near that country, perhaps, not in the immediate neighborhood of the disturbed region, but a neighborhood which would give him naturally the opportunity of communication with men of great importance, and I can hardly conceive that after that visit he should not have acquired and communicated much information. In truth, Sir, we have gotten and are getting only what cannot be refused to us, as the Government thinks. We have got only what they dare not detain; and, if the farther papers, which ought to be produced and which exist, are brought down, that which is, I argue, made plain enough without them would be made plainer still. On the 5th September a great meeting took place at St. Laurent, and the *Manitoba* shortly afterwards published an account of this meeting, with an editorial preface, from which this is an extract:

"The *Manitoba* is the organ of the population of French origin, not only of this Province, but also of the new Provinces of the North-West; and we are always pleased to open our columns to the friends of our cause and of our rights. Here is the last letter of our correspondent, dated the 16th September, 1884:

"Sir.—I think I shall interest your readers by giving them a short report of the great meeting held at St. Laurent, on the 5th September. This meeting was composed of French half-breeds, from all the surrounding parishes, and had been called for the purpose of respectfully submitting to His Lordship Mgr. Grandin, and to the other members of the clergy of the diocese of St. Albert, regret at not having their co-operation in the movement going on to-day to obtain from the Federal Government what the half-breed population claims to be entitled to. There were also present at the meeting His Lordship Mgr. Grandin, bishop of St. Albert, the Rev. Father Fourmond, of the St. Laurent mission, the Rev. Father Touze, of the mission of the Sacred Heart, and the Rev. Father Lecocq, of the mission of Cumberland.

"Mr. Louis Riel was appointed president of the meeting, the object of which relates to these two questions: 1st. Why do the clergy keep out of the movement going on to-day, and even seem hostile to it? 2nd. Are the claims of the half-breeds upon the Government good, just and legitimate?

"Mr. Gabriel Dumont briefly stated the uneasiness felt by his compatriots at the abstention of the clergy from taking part in their deliberations. Our intentions, he said, are wrongly interpreted or wrongly understood, and the abstention of the clergy from coming to our aid can only be injurious to us. Mr. Dumont, overcome by emotion, begged His Lordship to direct and enlighten them, adding that his voice, always respected as that of God, would be listened to with the same docility as in the past.

"The venerable prelate deigned to reply immediately, that if, for some time, the relations between the clergy and the half-breed popula-

copy

tion, concerning the events which have arisen, have seemed cool, indifferent even, still this reserve in no way proved a diminution of affection and of charity, but was only the effect of absolute prudence, necessary under present circumstances, in view of the mystery with which the proceedings up to that day had been surrounded—mystery which not only left the clergy without sufficient light to pronounce intelligently, but also necessarily gave rise to serious suspicions, to fears and alarms really painful. Speak plainly, added His Lordship; tell us what you want, and we shall tell you what we think. If justice is on your side, we will help you with all our might, as we have always done in the past. His Grace was listened to with respect and a religious attention.

"Mr. Charles Nolin spoke next, with an emotion and a conviction which gained for him the most sympathetic attention. He said he bitterly deplored the painful abandonment in which the half-breed population were left by those in whom they had always found devoted friends and fathers, while such an important question for this population is agitated. They are all the more sensible of this abandonment because they have an invincible faith in the rectitude of their intentions and in the justice of their cause. Mr. Nolin concluded by a statement of the principal points, showing the basis of their claims on the Federal Government. Our demands, he said, must be made respectfully, no doubt, but they must also be made with earnestness, force and perseverance. No rebellion; this mode has never been seriously in the mind of anyone, because it would be a crime; we will keep to legitimate means."

"His Lordship again declared his affection and devotion to the well-being of his flock on all occasions, where the rights of religion, of honor and of justice were not compromised by their mode of action."

Then there is a discussion upon certain local questions in regard to schools, which is immaterial. Then:

"Mr. Riel, president of the meeting, spoke next. In order, he said, to completely dissipate all misunderstanding, to take away all bad suspicion, and especially to show the value and importance of our demands, I will give a statement of our principal claims."

"We want:

"1st. The sub-division of the North-West Territories into Provinces;

"2nd. For the settlers of the North-West the same advantages as those granted in 1870 to the settlers of Manitoba;

"3rd. A grant of 240 acres of land to the half-breeds who have not yet received that grant from the Government;

"4th. An immediate gratuitous grant, by letters patent, to the proprietors who occupy them, of the lands of which they are in possession;

"5th. The offer for sale, by the Government, of half a million of acres of land, the products of this sale to be placed at interest and applied to the aid of half-breeds in the establishment of hospitals, orphanages, schools, etc., or in supplying the poorer persons with ploughs or other agricultural implements, and in distributing seeds in the spring;

"6th. The reservation of about one hundred townships, chosen in the swampy lands, which are not likely to be settled before a long time. These lands to be distributed to the half-breed children of the coming generation and during 120 years, each child to receive his share when he reaches the age of 18 years;

"7th. A subvention of at least one thousand dollars to sustain an establishment of nuns in each place where a great number of half-breed families are established;

"8th. An amelioration in the conditions of labor asked from the Indians, and a greater care of their persons, so as to prevent them from dying with hunger.

"His Lordship acceded again to the wishes of the meeting, and gave his opinions on the different propositions submitted by the president. Among these propositions there are some, said His Lordship, which touch too nearly to politics, and must leave us indifferent, never wishing to take part in political events, and of a more or less doubtful interest to the population and to religion. The other propositions, added His Lordship, I have myself taken steps for a long time in regard to your special interest. I made all possible advances towards the Government to obtain justice. I have even obtained promises that I believed official, but that I regret to see forgotten to-day. I felt the same discontent that you have felt yourselves, and I did not fail to complain in high places."

The extract I read before now finds its proper place:

"His Lordship dwelt on the necessity of a close union and a great confidence in God, on the necessity of being truly Christian and religious, in order to succeed. You want, said His Lordship, to possess all those qualities to affirm your national character. You will never be anything and will never have any influence without a perfect union. At this moment the Rev. Father Fourmond spoke, showing the inappreciable advantages that union, concord and mutual help would bring to the population, advantages which were both political and religious.

The rest of the paper applies to matters which are not material. Then Serg. Keenan, on the 17th of September, 1884, reports from Batoche:

"On Friday last, 5th inst., a meeting of Riel's supporters was convened at St. Laurent (about seven miles from here) at which nearly all the half-breeds in the surrounding settlements were present.

"There were also a number of half-breeds and white men from Prince Albert, including Messrs. Jackson, Scott and Labister, three of Riel's strongest supporters in that district.

"The meeting, I believe, was called for the purpose of carrying on the work. Speeches were made, condemning the Government generally, and Mr. Jackson stated that this country belonged to the Indians, and not to the Dominion of Canada.

"I met Riel a few days ago, and during our conversation he told me that the Government, through Bishop Grandin, had offered him a seat in the council or in the Dominion Senate."

In the same month of September, 1884, it is reported in *Le Manitoba* that the Minister of Public Works was at Qu'Appelle, and the paper goes on to say:

"After mass Sir Hector Langevin addressed the Metis. They asked that the Government should give them scrip, as it did to those of Manitoba. Sir Hector considered the request reasonable, and promised to submit it to his colleagues."

I have no doubt he did so—by word of mouth. I have no doubt that the hon. gentleman took pains to do so, but of course he did not do it in writing, because the writing is not brought down. On this occasion he appears to have had less influence with his colleagues than in some other instances. It also appears that the hon. gentleman had a correspondence with Mr. Jackson, a member of the council from the North-West Territories, because one of the commissioners, on the 8th April, 1885, refers Sir David Macpherson to Jackson's letter of the 3rd of September, in reference to the half-breeds' grievances; but unhappily that letter has not been brought down. So that all that concerns the hon. gentleman's interview, his correspondence, his mission and his action, has been forgotten; or care has been taken to prevent them from being brought before this House. Then the hon. gentleman, after having attended to this matter, attended to the not unimportant part of ministerial duties, the festive part, in the manner reported in the *Manitoba Free Press* of 11th September, 1884:

"At a banquet given to the Hon. Messrs. Langevin and McLelan, at Winnipeg, on their return from visiting the North-West, Sir Hector Langevin said: 'He had conversed with men both in the towns and country. He had asked if there were any grievances, and they had said there were none. Both men in the towns and farmers were satisfied with their positions. Only two farmers had told him they had any grievances, and this was because there were no ladies in the place.'"

I have no doubt the hon. gentleman's language was received with "laughter and applause." Blood and tears have followed since from his superficial and mistaken view of the North-West situation. On the 25th September, 1884, Serg. Keenan reports from Batoche as follows:—

"I have the honor to state that since my last report all has been quiet here. There has been, however, frequent meetings of Riel's committee held in different parts of the settlement. It is almost impossible for me to obtain any information as to what transpires at these meetings, as they are conducted with secrecy, and no person, excepting members of the committee, is allowed to take part in them. At all the public meetings Riel and his supporters have been very moderate, or rather cautious, in their utterances; but I learn that they appear in disguise at these open gatherings, and advocate very different measures in their councils. The last meeting was held a week ago, at the house of Baptiste Boyer, one of the chief supporters of the movement. Charles Nolin, another member, and one of the most unreasonable, proposed that the half-breeds make certain demands on the Government, and if not complied with they take up arms at once, and commence killing every white man they can find, and incite the Indians to do the same. I obtained this information from an old country Frenchman, who belonged to the committee, and left it on account of the extreme and unreasonable measures it advocated. This man, Nolin, is the most dangerous of the half-breeds, for the reason that he is strongly in favor of tampering with the Indians."

On the 23rd October *Le Manitoba* published a statement of the demands of the natives, as presented by Louis Riel at the meeting of the 5th September. It does not appear to be in the exact words, but its substance is similar to that which I read awhile ago; therefore I merely refer to it without repeating it. It was in October, as I have said, that Lieutenant Governor Dewdney visited St. Albert, Edmonton and Stobart, which is in the same neighborhood. He saw the bishop and clergy upon the subject, and must have learned of the troubles. But where is his report? In November, 1884, a petition was circulated largely in the North-West Territories, to which I referred in a former

17

speech dealing with this question, which petition called upon the Government to grant relief in respect to the grievances to which I have referred. But it is not brought down. There is a report in the *Regina Leader* of a meeting at Moosomin some time in December, 1884, on the subject of the settlers' rights, and amongst the resolutions passed at that meeting was this one:

"That the Government should recognise the claims of the half-breeds, as was done in the Province of Manitoba, and thus determine a question calculated to disturb the peaceful development of the country."

But nothing is brought down. Then, on the 20th October, from Prince Albert, Major Crozier reports:

"I beg to state that constable Elliott returned from Carlton on the evening of the 15th, and reported to me that a man named Tomkins, who is employed by the Indian Department of that place as interpreter, has told him that Riel was drilling men at St. Jerome, and that a large meeting had been held there on the 12th, at midnight.

"He further told him that a chief from Muskeg Lake had been sent to see Big Bear, to request him to attend a meeting of Riel's, to be held at Batoche in two weeks' time. I sent a man in plain clothes to the vicinity of St. Jerome to find out, if possible, the truth of the reports. He returned yesterday, and reports all quiet. He states that there is a rumor of a large meeting to be held at Batoche in two or three weeks, as soon as all the crops are in. He could find out nothing about any drill having been performed.

"I have stationed a man in plain clothes in the vicinity of Batoche, who will keep me informed regarding the movements of Riel.

"The half-breed population are in a very discontented state, principally attributable to the utter failure of their crops."

On the 20th November a letter is written by a person whose name is not given. It contains statements principally about the Indians. It declares arrangements had been made for a general gathering this summer (1885) at Duck Lake; that invitations had been issued for all persons to come. It was also stated that:

"William Badger went to their reserve on behalf of Louis Riel, and demanded of the chiefs Attackakwoop and Mustowasis if he would be allowed to speak. He was told that he could not say anything, as they did not wish their names to appear among people who were trying to make trouble."

A considerable amount of information is given as to the discontented state of the Indians. Then, on the 2nd January, 1885, Major Crozier telegraphed as follows to the Comptroller of the North-West Mounted Police:—

"Riel proposed to Macdowall to go. States if Government would give him assistance in money; suppose \$5,000 enough."

On the 31st December Inspector Howe, from Carlton, reports:

"On the 9th December there was a large half-breed meeting called by Riel at St. Laurent, for the purpose of again talking over their Bill of Rights.

"On the 22nd December Mr. Macdowall, member of the North-West Council, accompanied by Father André, Roman Catholic priest at Prince Albert, proceeded to St. Laurent, at the request of Riel, who desired to see and talk with Mr. Macdowall as member for the district. On Mr. Macdowall's arrival at St. Laurent, Riel informed him that he wished to make a proposition to him, of which he wished representation made to Government.

"He first stated that he was very poor, and that he did not know what would become of him; was afraid he would starve, and starvation made men desperate; that he had great power over the half-breeds, and that he could influence them, politically or otherwise, as he thought fit. He said he was tired of Canada, and wished to return to Montana, but had not the means to do so; that if the Government would give him pecuniary assistance, and something to settle on his wife and family (Mr. Macdowall thinks \$5,000 would be accepted by him)—that if the Government grants his request he will at once leave for Montana and remain there. He would guarantee to give up all connection with the half-breeds in the country, and having, he says, such great influence over them, he will guarantee that all claims they now have against the Government will be at once dropped. By this he means that he will throw over all his half-breed supporters and return to Montana himself."

On 23rd December, 1884, Gagnon reports:

"I have the honor to report that during the last month the half-breeds of St. Laurent and Batoche settlements held a public meeting to adopt a petition drawn up by a committee, and that this petition, signed by

the settlers of both settlements, has been forwarded to Ottawa. This meeting, from all reports, seems to have been very orderly.

"Several of the other smaller reunions have taken place during the same period; but all have reference to school matters. The half-breeds are pressing Riel to settle amongst them, and have given him, as a token of their gratitude for services rendered, a house well furnished, and will further, on 2nd January next, present him with a purse.

"These testimonials of the good will of the majority would go towards denying certain rumors, which say that several are lacking confidence in their leader; that his way of acting and speaking denotes a very hot head, and that he does not now agree with their priest. There is no doubt that a great number are still led by him, and would act upon his dictates. Some time ago I sent several men to the south branch to have horses shod. The river being full of floating ice, they could not cross. Some way or other, the report was brought to the east side of the river that these men were sent to arrest Riel, who was then at the crossing. Within half an hour over 100 men had collected to protect him. There is a certain amount of suffering among the half-breeds, but not to the extent it was expected to reach. Large quantities of supplies are required for this part of the country, and all who have horses can make a living by freighting. As far as I can see, the chief grievance of the half-breeds is, that they are afraid that the Government will not sanction the way they, amongst themselves, have agreed to take their home-steads—to chains frontage on the river, by two miles back."

On the 8th December a meeting was held at Moosomin, at which a resolution was passed in favor of the recognition of the half-breeds' rights, as in Manitoba. Early in January there was a meeting held at Edmonton, on North-West Council affairs, at which Mr. Oliver, a member of the council, spoke. He stated that the order defining the powers of the council did not arrive till after the Session had opened. He complained that funds were controlled by the Government. There was a meeting, very shortly afterwards, at Saskatchewan city, at which Mr. Oliver spoke. He stated that the half-breed lands resolution of the North-West Council was moved by Mr. Macdowall, seconded by Mr. Jackson, and unanimously supported by the council; to which an answer had been received by telegraph, that the matter would be considered at the ensuing meeting of the Ottawa Cabinet, in September. The *Qu'Appelle Gazette* on 22nd January makes this announcement:

"We are informed that Louis Riel and others are engaged in drafting a petition to the Dominion Government, demanding certain concessions, which they say have been promised to the half-breeds of the North-West Territories, and it is the expressed intention of the half-breeds of the Saskatchewan district that if these concessions are not granted which are asked for, to resort to arms, to force a compliance with their demands. Mr. Vankoughnet's statement to the contrary notwithstanding."

There was a meeting in Sturgeon church on 7th February, at which Mr. Oliver again spoke, and referred to efforts made in council to press on the attention of the Federal Government the necessity of taking action on certain matters of personal interest to the people of the North-West, namely, school lands, timber dues, grazing lands and half-breed lands. In the same month resolutions were passed at mass meetings of settlers, held throughout Assiniboia, at which it was resolved:

"That the Government should promptly recognise the claims of half-breeds, as was done in the Province of Manitoba, and thus determine a question calculated to retard the present development of the country."

In the election address of Mr. Wilson, published in the *Edmonton Bulletin* on 31st January, he says:

"I consider that the half-breeds of the country are entitled to the same treatment as their brethren received in Manitoba; and therefore I will support, as far as possible, any efforts made to secure that which they have a right to look for."

On 14th January, 1885, Mr. Crozier reports:

"On my return from Carlton and Prince Albert I was informed that a party of Indians had gone west to Edmonton, and would notify on the road all the Indians that there would be a large gathering at Duck Lake next spring. (I presume the annual sun dance being the occasion of the gathering). On further enquiry I find that they went only to Red Pheasant's reserve, at the Eagle Hills, and from that they returned to Duck Lake, being persuaded to do so by one of the leading Indians there. This is the second time Indians have come here on the same mission that I know of, others may have gone on. Certainly, there is an effort being made to have a large gathering at Duck Lake next spring. I was informed, also, that there will be an effort made to get the Qu'Appelle and other Indians in the south-easterly part of the Territory to assemble there. Little Pine, too, it appears, when at Blackfoot Crossing, tried

to arrange to get as many as possible of Blackfoot and Southern Indians to come north in the spring. He has told the Indians that he has arranged that many of them will be there. Poundmaker says that Little Pine told his young men not to dispose of their guns, and he further says that Little Pine has come to some understanding with the Blackfeet, but is not sure as to the nature. He, Poundmaker, says, when Little Pine recovers his eyesight he will get full particulars.

And so on. On the 25th February Irvine telegraphs:

"Gagnon telegraphs: 'Half-breeds held a meeting at South Branch yesterday. Object to beg Riel to stay in country; he will stay; evidently his own meeting; orderly.'

On 26th January Gagnon reports:

"I have the honor to report that during the last month nothing of importance has occurred amongst the half-breeds in this district. They had, after New Year, a social meeting, at which they presented their chief, Riel, with the sum of \$60, as a token of their good-will. The meeting was very orderly and loyal, and no allusions were made to the actual troubles. It seems that Riel has had difficulty in getting enough supplies for his own family lately, and had to beg assistance from the Roman Catholic missionary at St. Laurent, who assisted him. It has been stated to me that the petition prepared had been sent to Ottawa; but it appears that only a letter, preparatory to sending the petition, has been forwarded."

No trace of that letter appears in these papers—

"The petition is undergoing being signed, and will be forwarded next month."

On 27th February there is a report in the Prince Albert Times of a trouble at Halcrow settlement, on the south branch. It says:

"We learn that considerable excitement has been prevailing in the vicinity of the south branch for the last few weeks. At one meeting we understand the natives turned out armed, a rumor having got about that Riel was to be arrested. A large meeting is to be held next Tuesday at the Halcrow settlement."

You have thus seen, Mr. Speaker, the course of events, from the time Riel came into the country, so far as it is described in the papers which the Government have brought down and in the public newspapers. But I must once again remind you that all the time there were running along with the question I have been dealing with other questions which had grown up. The land, the surveys, the reserves, and the vague claims which, on the sub-stratum of solid ground of grievance unredressed, Riel had conjured up. But those mentioned were the most substantial; and I am presently to give you the proofs. Meantime, I have now carried the story down to the end of January, within a few weeks of the outbreak; for on 10th March Gagnon telegraphed from Carlton that half-breeds were excited and preparing arms; and thenceforward news comes thick and fast. I do not go into the history of the outbreak. That will be discussed with fuller material next Session, but we know that it took shape in March early, and surely there were warnings enough, even apart from those suppressed. It was an outbreak almost entirely of French half-breeds, supported by Indians. There were a few Scotch or English half-breeds, but the attitude of the bulk was neutral. The attitude of the English and Scotch half-breeds in the immediate neighborhood appears, I say, to have been neutral, if we can judge from a rather extraordinary meeting held on 22nd of March. The meeting was held at St. Catharines church; the Rev. E. Mattheson was chairman and W. Craig, secretary. Two resolutions were passed:

"First, that the members of this meeting continue to sympathise, as they have always done, with the French half-breeds, in their desire to obtain their legal rights by all constitutional means."

"Second, that they do not approve of the resort to arms or the rising of the Indians, and wish to remain neutral."

It was resolved to forward a copy of these minutes to the officer in charge at Carlton and another to L. Riel. After the outbreak the comments of the press appeared, and it is only necessary to say that the Conservative press declared with extraordinary unanimity that the half-breeds had grievances, and they referred to those two points—the question of the extinguishment of the Indian title and the question of the surveys and the half-breed lands. I could quote to you, Mr. Speaker, if I had time, articles from the

Mail, and from the principal French Canadian Conservative newspapers, and from *Le Manitoba*, in this sense. *Le Manitoba*, on the 3rd of May last, reports an interview with Archbishop Taché, a few days before, at Qu'Appelle, in which the Archbishop said:

"The labors of the land commission are giving satisfaction, and if this measure of justice had been taken three months earlier it would have prevented the rising."

Now, Sir, having advanced a little beyond the period of the action actually taken by the Government, but only two or three weeks, in order to find ourselves in the actual face of the rising, I come to the first action this Administration took after the Act of the 15th of May, 1879, which authorises them to deal with this question; and the first action, as shown by the papers, was on the 26th of January, 1885. I have shown you the condition of things as it was in 1878; I have shown you the state of things as it presented itself to the Ministers at that time; I have shown you the report of the Deputy Minister, and of the authorities as to its pressing and urgent character; I have shown you the legislative authority with which they clothed themselves, and there is an absolute blank as to that executive action which they asked to be allowed to take from the time they received that power in May, 1879, until the 26th of January, 1885. And I ask you, under what circumstances it was, after having read the correspondences to which I have referred, that on the 26th of January, 1885, that action, however inadequate it may be regarded, was taken. Is it not perfectly clear and obvious that it was taken under the pressure of this excitement, this agitation, these meetings, these difficulties, after neglect, supineness, apathy, procrastination, beyond example or excuse. On that day, 26th January, 1885, the Minister of the Interior reported to Council: That, with a view of settling equitably the claims of the half-breeds—first, the claims of those in Manitoba and the North-West, who would have been entitled to land had they resided in Manitoba at the time of the transfer—and those are the claims with which I am dealing up to this time; and secondly, the claims of those who, residing in Manitoba, did not participate in the grant—and those are the claims of the unenumerated half-breeds of Manitoba, with which I propose to deal separately—he says it is desirable to do—what? To ascertain the numbers of half-breeds—to ascertain the number of all of the half-breeds; and he recommends that he be authorised to obtain an enumeration of them, and to employ three persons to make such enumeration. There is no declaration as to what the settlement should be, no statement of the principle upon which action is to be taken. The proposal is to number the unenumerated half-breeds of Manitoba as well, and thus to settle, through this machinery, another grievance, which I shall deal with next. The proposal is only to obtain power to appoint three persons to number the people. On the 28th January, accordingly, the Minister's advice was followed and he obtained that power, and that step seems to have exhausted his energies. He seems, once again, to have adopted a passive attitude, with the exception that on the 4th February, 1885, he sent this telegram to Mr. Dewdney:

"Government has decided to investigate claims of half-breeds, and, with that view, has directed enumeration of those who did not participate in grant under Manitoba Act. No representations received recently."

You see by the last sentence of that telegram—"no representations received recently"—that there was obviously communication from the North-West upon which the Minister acted. But we do not get that communication, and the Minister says that no representation was received recently. Well, Sir, I have given you a bead roll of representations, not all of them, because we have not got them here, but all which the incited Government chooses to bring down, which makes it the very acme of absurdity to say that no representations have been made. He does not

poor

instruct the Lieutenant Governor to communicate this course to the half-breeds. There is no telegram instructing him to tell the half-breeds that a census had been ordered—nothing but this simple telegram; and that being sent, as I said, he pauses, and precious hours were lost, because had decided action been then taken it would have gone far to break the back of the whole affair. When do we find the next movement? The next paper brought down is a telegram of 18th March, 1885, from the Minister to the Lieutenant Governor:

"It is wished that Mr. Forget should be a member of the commission on half-breed claims. Is he available? Answer."

Why, after waiting from the 26th January to the 18th of March, this haste to get Mr. Forget's consent? What was the sudden hurry? What awoke him? Why, the storm had broken while the Minister was sleeping, and the storm having broken, he was trying to keep the storm off. On the 10th of March the commissioner telegraphs from Regina to the comptroller:

"Just received the following telegram from Gagnon, dated to-day, from Carlton. Have shown it to Lieutenant Governor: 'Half-breeds excited. Move about more than usual—preparing arms. Do not know cause or object of these preparations.'

On the 11th March Superintendent Crozier telegraphs from Carlton:

"Half-breeds greatly excited; reported they threaten attack on Carlton before 18th. Half-breeds refuse to take freight or employment for Government. Will stop all freight coming into the country after 16th of this month. Getting arms ready. Leader will not allow people to leave home, as they may be required. Origin of trouble, I think, letter received, stating Riel not recognised British subject. They expect arms from the States. Have ordered twenty-five men from Battleford, and one gun, to come here at once."

On the 14th of March Col. Irvine telegraphs from Regina:

"Lieutenant Governor received telegram dated Carlton, to-day, from Crozier, saying half-breed rebellion may break out at any moment and joined by Indians, and asking that his division be largely increased. Would recommend that at least 100 men be sent at once, before roads break up. Please instruct."

On the 15th of March the comptroller telegraphs Col. Irvine:

"Start for the north quickly as possible, with all available men up to 100. Telegraph marching-out state, and report passing telegraph station."

There was the state of things on the 18th of March, and now I have given you the explanation of what had waked up the Minister, and why he was telegraphing to find out whether Forget would accept a seat on the commission to number the half-breeds. The Minister of the Interior had his telegrams, too, though he does not show them. He knew the cause of the trouble; he did not believe any cock-and-bull story about Riel not being recognised as a British subject. He knew it was the half-breed claims; and he sought, alas, too late, to do that which he ought to have done years before. But those other telegrams of his are not brought down; they are suppressed. On the 19th of March Mr. Dewdney replies in the affirmative to the telegram of the 18th; and on the same day Mr. Burgess writes a letter to _____ I presume to the three commissioners—enquiring:

"Whether he would be ready to act upon a commission which the Government is about to appoint, for the purpose of investigating the claims of the half-breeds in the North-West Territories, and asking a telegraphic reply."

On the 22d there is a telegram from Winnipeg, Ruttan to Pearce, but that to which it replies is left out:

"Goulet out west; locality uncertain; expected return Monday; did not receive letter or telegram; his brother thinks no doubt will accept appointment."

That, obviously, is a reply to a telegram from Pearce, wanting to know where Goulet is. But it is not produced. So that you find there was positively at length a little ripple of excitement in the Depart-

ment of the Interior, for they were telegraphing to the North-West to obtain people to attend to this matter. Then, on the 26th of March, the First Minister gave his account in the House of the appointment of the commission, which is a remarkable statement, in contrast with the facts, which I would like to read, but which I have not the strength or the breath to read. On the 28th of March Mr. Macpherson reports again to council. It was now seen that more was required than a census; it was seen that the proposal simply to send a commission to number the people, without deciding on their claims, would not answer; and on the 30th of March an Order in Council was made on Mr. Macpherson's report. That Order in Council recites his report as, first, recommending the settlement of the claims; second, recommending the expediency of satisfying those claims by granting—first, to each half-breed head of a family resident in the North-West Territories at the transfer, the lot of which he is at present in undisputed and *bond fide* occupation, by virtue of residence and occupation, to the extent of 160 acres, any deficiency below 160 acres to be made up by scrip, redeemable in land, at \$1 an acre; and, in case such head of a family is not in occupation of the land, then an amount of scrip to be redeemable in land to the amount of \$160; second, to each child of a half-breed resident in the North-West Territories at the transfer, and born before the 15th of July, 1870, the lot in his possession, up to 240 acres, any deficiency to be made up in scrip, as before; and if the child is not in possession of any land, scrip to the extent of the 240 acres. The order goes on to say that the Minister of the Interior, on the representation made, that it was desirable to have made an enumeration of the half-breeds in Manitoba and the North-West Territories who would have been entitled to land had they resided in Manitoba, was authorised, on the 28th of January, to appoint commissioners, and the following gentlemen were accordingly appointed to carry into effect the order: Messrs. Street, Goulet and Forget; that the Minister of the Interior thought that the scope of the enquiry to be made by the commissioners appointed under the Order in Council of January should be enlarged, and that the commissioners should be empowered not only to enumerate half-breeds resident outside, but also to report to the Minister of the Interior the persons entitled to be dealt with, and also the extent, including all outside of the old Province of Manitoba; that he also thought the commissioners should exercise all the powers and functions provided by the Dominion Lands Act, and recommended that the Order in Council of the 28th of January should be cancelled; and the Minister recommended that the commissioners to make their enquiry and report should be the same as those appointed under the authority of the Order in Council of the 28th of January, namely, Messrs. Street, Goulet and Forget; and it is ordered accordingly. I may say there is no evidence of Messrs. Street, Goulet and Forget having been appointed on the Order of January at all; nothing has been brought down on that subject. On the contrary, we find enquiries made, whether they would accept at a date when the March appointment was imminent. You will observe, first, that there is an acknowledgment of the defective character of the Order in Council of the 28th of January—that more ought to be done than to enumerate. You will observe, secondly, that power is given to investigate and report upon claims, and to give certificates to each claimant who was found entitled to them; you will observe the first attempt, in the third place, that there is an attempt made to define the principle of the grants—to say what, in the opinion of the Government, the people should have; and that definition is a wrong definition, which the Government was forced to retract and retire from in a few days. You will observe, in the next place, that the allegation that Messrs. Street, Goulet and Forget were appointed under that Order in Council of the

copy

23th of January is unproved, and that Order in Council is cancelled. It would not answer; it could not stand the stress of the weather; it was a fair-weather order; the storm had come, and it was quite inadequate to the occasion. On the 30th of March the commission is issued to Messrs. Street, Forget and Goulet, in the terms of the Order in Council authorising them to enumerate and report the persons entitled under the Act; and on the same 30th of March, 1885, there are instructions from Burgess to Street, the chairman of the commission, in which he says:

"The advance of spring renders it desirable that as little delay as possible may occur in the work of the commissioners."

If it were in order I would move to strike out the word "spring," and to substitute the word "Riel" in lieu thereof; I think it is much more likely to have been true. However, with that command of euphemistic phraseology which is peculiar to Government departments, that is the language of the order. Then, the commissioners leave Winnipeg on the 7th of April; an itinerary is provided; the secretary of the land board is ordered to place the whole staff of the land office at their disposal. They are told; "If you meet anyone on the trails, take steps at once to investigate on the spot." Why such a change? They were to go out in the highways and hedges and compel them to come in—if you meet them on the trails, stop them, and investigate their claims; do not stand on any ceremony; set up the staff of justice wherever you are, because the trail will lead to St. Laurent. Forms, and notices, and lists were provided; the Indian agents were ordered to attend the meetings of the commissioners; the treaty Indians were to be told by the commission that if they desired enfranchisement they would be dealt with equitably and liberally. In the case of squatters who were not half-breeds, they were to do nothing, but to take the evidence and forward it, and assure the people that their claims would receive the prompt and liberal consideration of the Government, through the land board. They were told to grant certificates to the half-breed heads of families and their children, and to recognise the illegitimate children. Circulars or letters were to be addressed to land agents, timber agents, Indian agents and Mounted Police, asking them to aid the work of the commission. What a change! What a pleasing and cheering spectacle is the action of the Government at this stage! What a pity they did not do this earlier! What a sad commentary on the condition of things they had allowed to exist for so many years! It is true they show great diligence now; but alas it is too late. On the 30th of March a letter was sent to Mr. Egan, the manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway, telling him that posters are to be distributed, at the earliest possible moment, over the whole railway system. These were posters announcing the messengers of peace. A letter is sent to the secretary of the land board, asking him to assist in every way—to put his whole staff at the disposal of the commission—and to supply notices: first, to the Lieutenant Governor; second, to the Mounted Police Commissioner; third, to each post office; fourth, to each land office; fifth, to each Crown timber office; sixth, to each Customs office; seventh, to each Inland Revenue office; eighth, to each registry office; ninth to each telegraph office in Manitoba and the North-West Territories; also, to each Roman Catholic priest, Protestant minister or missionary, and to each Hudson Bay post. The glad news was to be disseminated all over the Territory, that now, at last, the commission was coming. Then there is a letter to the Indian Department, asking them to give the commission their assistance. The Minister says, in the letter:

"It is of the highest public importance that instructions to this effect should be issued immediately."

Then, on the 30th of March, a letter is sent to Governor Dewdney, advising him in advance, so that no time may be lost in taking the steps suggested. On the 31st of March, Burgess telegraphs to Burpee at the Land Office:

"No word from Roger Goulet. Endeavor to find his whereabouts, and reply quickly as possible."

On the 31st of March, Burgess telegraphs to Jackson, member of the council at Qu'Appelle:

"Half-breed commission will be at Qu'Appelle on the 7th and 8th April."

Why this haste? Why this agitation?

It being six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

Mr. BLAKE. Before recess I was discussing the subject of the recognition, under the order of 30th March, 1885, of the rights of the half-breeds in respect to the extinguishment of the Indian title, and I have shown that the recognition is inadequate in this respect. In the case, say, of the half-breed head of a family, he would be entitled, under the arrangements made under the Manitoba Act, to 160 acres, or scrip for 160 acres, in respect of the extinguishment of the Indian title, but he was only, under the order and instructions, to be permitted to obtain so much of that scrip as should be in excess of the acreage to which he would be entitled to by occupation. If he was in occupation of 160 acres that would nullify his claim altogether in respect to the Indian title; and so of the minor: he was entitled to scrip for 240 acres, but if he were in occupation of 240 or any less quantity to which he would be entitled as a settler, that occupation would, *pro tanto*, under these documents, diminish his right to scrip for 240 acres in respect of the Indian title. Thus, even at this stage, the Government declined to recognise the rights of the half-breeds; but they were very soon obliged to recede from that illiberal position, for no sooner had the chief commissioner arrived at Manitoba than he telegraphs, on the 4th April, to Mr. Macpherson, as follows:—

"If desired by half-breeds, would it not be advisable to grant scrip, say one sixty or two forty dollars, permitting them to acquire title to land in occupation through possession. Otherwise, Government really gives nothing for Indian title."

He followed that up on the 5th April by the following telegram:

"Commission agree in recommending that power be granted them to deal with occupying half-breed in manner surmised in my message of yesterday; also, if possible, to enable commission to settle claims of supplementary Manitoba half-breeds, by allowing them same terms as North-West half-breeds."

On the 5th of April he wrote the Minister of the Interior:

"We arrived here early this morning, and met my fellow commissioners at the Dominion lands office at 10 o'clock. They introduced the subject as to which I telegraphed you yesterday, and spoke very strongly as to its being one which was likely to be a serious stumbling block in our dealings with the half-breeds. Lest you should not fully have understood my telegram, I will shortly state the point. Suppose we find that a half-breed has been upon and since 13th July, 1877, in occupation of a parcel, say 160 acres, under circumstances which, if he were a white settler, would entitle him to a grant of the land under the homestead clauses of the Dominion Lands Act, under the authority we now possess we could, if he were the head of a family, allow him nothing more than the 160 acres; we could allow him nothing for his claim as a half-breed; and inasmuch as the Government has all along been purporting to deal with the half-breeds as if they had some general right beyond those of ordinary incoming settlers, my fellow commissioners say that great dissatisfaction and disappointment will be created if we give to these occupying half-breeds only that which an ordinary settler can claim, and

nothing for the extinguishment of his Indian title. Mr. Pierce discussed the matter very fully with us, and concurred in the advisability of our obtaining, if possible, the power to enable us to allow the half-breed to claim the land occupied by him under the homestead provisions, and, in addition, to give him his scrip for \$160 or \$240, as the case may be, for his Indian title."

Then there is a telegram from this same Mr. Street, chairman of the half-breed commission:

"Important conference to-day with influential half-breeds' deputation. All difficulty removed, excepting two. First, all children will refuse money script, demanding certificate for two forty acres land instead, like Manitoba. Several bishops and priests support this demand. Second, half-breeds having homes on small front unacceptable to buy these at \$1 per acre, and free grant one sixty acres from nearest vacant Government land, additional to allowance to extinguish Indian title. See Jackson's letter, 3rd September, to Langevin. These two concessions absolutely necessary if commission—"

(Remainder of telegram undecipherable).

On 6th April, 1885, the Minister of Interior telegraphed to Mr. Street:

"No objection to your suggestion to give scrip and allow occupants to acquire title through possession when desired by them."

So that it was not until the 6th April that the concession was made to place these persons in exactly the same position as the Manitoba half-breeds in this regard. On the same date, 6th April, Mr. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, telegraphs Mr. Street:

"Manitoba supplementary claims are being considered and disposed of here in all cases where evidence has been filed, which comprise nearly all that class. You need not advertise for evidence, but if any offer, you may take it and forward here."

On the same 6th of April the Minister telegraphs once again to Mr. Street:

"Pray remember that Government determined, in January, before there was any disturbance, to appoint commission, and that half-breeds were notified thereof on 4th February."

He is very anxious to show that he did it a very long time ago, and so he wants Mr. Street to remember; and, in his communications to the people, to point out that in January there was a determination to appoint a commission—but that was a very different kind of thing—and that the half-breeds were notified. Of such notification, however, we have received no proof. There was no disturbance, the Minister says. Was there no disturbance from June, 1884, when Louis Riel came to the country? Was there no disturbance at an earlier period? Were there not meetings? Were there not petitions? Were not the petitions and contributions a condition of discontent? Were there no remonstrances, letters, warnings, as to the condition of the people. But the Minister says there was no disturbance before—there was none in January. Then on the 10th, the 11th and the 12th of April there were telegrams discussing and settling the mode of dealing with the water frontages at Qu'Appelle, which were left unsettled, as I will show, until the outbreak, and were arranged by the commission. Subsequently, amended forms of certificates, in accordance with the extended authority as to Indian title, were sent to the commissioners. Hence, the forms of certificates which had been originally provided would have been inadequate for the settlement which the Government, at the instigation of the commissioners, after they reached Winnipeg, agreed to make; and on the 18th of April the following Order in Council was passed: The Committee, on the recommendation of the Minister of the Interior, advise that the Order in Council, dated 30th of March ultimo, making provision for the manner in which claims existing in connection with the extinguishment of the Indian title preferred by half-breeds resident in the North-West Territories outside of the limits of Manitoba, previous to the 15th day of July, 1870, be amended, by providing:

"1. That the small water frontages, of which half-breeds are at present in ~~bond fide~~ possession, by virtue of residence and cultivation, be sold to them at \$1 per acre, the area in no case to exceed 40 acres, and payment therefor to be made within two years.

"2. That in satisfaction of their claims as actual settlers upon these small water frontages, which are proposed to be sold to them, they be permitted to select from lands open for homestead and pre-emption entry, as nearly as possible in the vicinity of their holdings, one-quarter section of 160 acres, more or less, the patents for which, however, shall not issue until payment has been made in full for the lands of which they are now in occupation, as aforesaid.

"3. That in the case of children of half-breed, heads of families residing in the North-West prior to the 16th of July, 1870, and born before that date, instead of an issue of \$240 in script they be granted a certificate entitling them to select 240 acres of land from any lands open for homestead and pre-emption entry.

Then comes the Commissioners' notice:

"Notice is hereby given that the undersigned have been appointed by letters patent, dated 30th of March, 1885, from Her Majesty the Queen, under the Great Seal of the Dominion of Canada, commissioners, with authority, among other things, to make a remuneration to the half-breeds, who, previous to the 15th of July, 1870, were resident within the ceded portion of the North-West Territory and outside the limits of the original Province of Manitoba; and to investigate their claims, as such half-breeds, existing in connection with the extinguishment of the Indian title, and to issue certificates to such half-breeds as shall prove before the commission their claims to consideration under sub-section e of section 81 of the Dominion Lands Act, 1883.

"And the commissioners will attend for the purpose of receiving hearing and adjudicating upon such claims at the places mentioned below."

And the places mentioned there, according to the itinerary furnished from the office of the Interior, were:

"At Fort Qu'Appelle, April 8th, 9th, to April 14th, both days inclusive; at Touchwood Hills, April 16th and 17th; at Regina, April 23rd to April 27th, both days inclusive; at Maple Creek, April 29th; at Calgary, May 1st to the 6th, both days included; at Fort McLeod, May 9th to May 12th, both days inclusive. Dates for the sitting of the committee at St. Albert, Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, Victoria, Fort Pitt, Battleford, St. Laurent, St. Louis de Langevin, Duck Lake, St. Antoine de Padoue and Prince Albert, will shortly be fixed. Dated the 4th April, 1885."

Thus showing you the wide area over which, in the opinion of the Government, it was necessary that these men should sit, in order to adjudicate upon these claims, no less than 17 different points being mentioned, of which 5 are in the focus of the disturbed districts. Now, I have only this to add: that the course the Government pursued in March and April, in reference to this commission, indicated their own sense of the importance of the removal of that grievance. They felt it was important to proceed, even in the middle of the outbreak, not to lose an hour, to give every publicity that was possible throughout the North-West, to the fact that justice was about to be done, and they felt that it was important, because they felt it was necessary, in order to secure the quiet and the inaction of the half-breeds in other parts of the territory, that not a moment should be lost in doing that tardy justice. I have now gone over the situation, with reference to the claims, in this regard, of the half-breeds of the North-West Territories, and I think I have established to you a case of delay, neglect and mismanagement beyond explanation and beyond excuse. I now turn to a cognate question, the question of the unenumerated half-breeds of the old Province of Manitoba. After the enumeration which took place in the early days, and the allotment of the 1,400,000 acres upon the basis that those enumerated were all that were entitled, it was found that many had not been counted. Of those, presumably, the bulk were absent in the North-West Territories, where many of the Manitoba half-breeds used to resort during the period of the Buffalo hunt, and for purposes of freighting. On the 9th April, 1875, the Dominion lands agent at Winnipeg was authorised to take evidence in the cases of those unenumerated half-breeds, and Mr. Justice Ryan and Mr. Machar were appointed in the same year, 1875, also, to make an enumeration. They did some work, and they reported, in 1876, that their work was incomplete. Mr. Ryan was ordered, by Order in Council of the 14th June, 1876, to take evidence, if offered, within two years from that time, at any point in the Territories in which he might be, he being at that time a stipendiary magistrate in the Territories. On the 19th June, 1876, this letter was written to Mr. Ryan on the subject:

copy

"Sir.—I am directed by the hon. the Minister to inform you that representations having been lately made by his Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface, to the effect that it would greatly facilitate the settlement of claims to half-breed lands scrip in Manitoba if authority were issued to you to take evidence in relation thereto of claimants who had removed from the Province into the North-West Territory previous to the late sittings of yourself and Mr. Machar, as commissioners, and that you were willing to undertake such duty; acting upon the suggestion of His Grace, being desirous of removing, as far as possible, any further obstacles to the final settlement of these claims, the Minister has been authorised, by an Order of the Privy Council, to request you to continue to act as commissioner, to take the evidence, in the usual form, of such claimants as may come before you for the purpose, at Swan River or elsewhere, where your duties as stipendiary magistrate may call you in the North-West Territory; such authority, however, not to extend beyond two years from the date of the Order, that is to say, the 14th instant. The Minister will be glad to know whether you are willing to take upon yourself such additional duty as the Order in Council may involve."

There was some correspondence with Mr. Ryan and some action upon that in 1876 and 1877. On the 7th May, 1877, Mr. George Newcombe and A. Mills, agents, respectively, of the Government, at Emerson and Portage la Prairie, were ordered to take evidence on the same subject. In June, 1878, a proposal was made, with reference to the Saskatchewan half-breeds, to extend the authority of Mr. Ryan, and on the 28th June, 1878, and the Minister announced that he would probably appoint Mr. Duck, Dominion land agent for the Saskatchewan, to make that investigation. Mr. Duck was so appointed, and on the 24th February, 1879, I see the Saskatchewan *Herald* alludes to Mr. Duck's recent visit to Battleford, and announces his mission to be to receive applications of persons claiming to be entitled to half-breed and old settlers' scrip. I have no more information on these subjects than that which I have stated. The reports of these various officers have not been brought down. Some kind of ticket or voucher was given by them to those who examined into their cases, but there was no recognition of their right. In the spring of 1880 a petition was sent in to the First Minister, as Minister of the Interior, by the residents of Manitoba village, Lake Manitoba, North-West Territories, humbly representing that:

"Whereas, under the terms of the Manitoba Act, scrip was to be issued to the half-breed heads of families and allotment of lands made to the children of the same resident in Manitoba on the 15th July, A.D. 1870, and whereas, subsequently, many of their families removed to the interior, and have not yet benefited by the terms of the said Manitoba Act; and whereas it appears that the allotments of land made in Manitoba for the benefit of children of said half-breed heads of families are likely to prove insufficient to cover all the claimants under the said Act: Now, therefore, your petitioners, who are interested in these matters, do most humbly pray that you will place us on an equal footing, and cause scrip to be issued to us at an early date in satisfaction of our just and lawful claims."

On the 10th May, 1880, that petition was acknowledged, and it was promised to be laid before the Minister for his consideration. There was a similar petition, couched in the same language, from the Saskatchewan region. It was signed by 102 names, and was in like form to that which I have read. It was forwarded to the Minister of the Interior by Mr. Thos. McKay, of Prince Albert, on the 19th May, 1880, and on the 10th July, 1880, consideration of that petition was promised on the Minister's return to Ottawa. On the 6th June, 1881, Mr. Lawrence Clarke, who had then become a member of the North-West Council, petitioned the North-West Council, then sitting at Battleford, as follows:—

"That there are residents within the North-West Territories in various settlements, but more particularly, so far as the personal knowledge of the undersigned extends, about Edmonton, Carlton, Duck Lake, St. Laurent, Prince Albert and Qu'Appelle, a number of half-breeds who were residents in what is now the Province of Manitoba at and before the 15th day of July, 1870, but who, in the interval between this date and the distribution of the scrips and lands specially provided in the terms of transfer, had removed from their residences, and are now living in the North-West Territories.

"That the undersigned, from such information as he has been able to collect, is quite convinced the total number of the above-described class of half-breeds is not large, and that proof of their claims has long since, in the majority of cases, been taken by Mr. Ryan, before his commission lapsed, or since by the local land agents, and which proof, for some time back, has been in the possession of the Department of the Interior at Ottawa.

"That these half-breeds, in many instances, were not aware of the sitting of the commissioners in Manitoba being limited in point of time, and, in nearly every instance, even had they been aware of such being the case, were not possessed of means to bear the expense consequent upon attendance thereat.

"That the general feeling of the community is that these half-breeds, possessing even rights with those who have already received scrips or grants of land in Manitoba, have not had that measure of justice meted out to them to which, by the terms of the surrender, they were entitled.

"The undersigned considers the subject as one of considerable importance, and very desirable for the peace, welfare and good government of the Territories, that it should be taken up and adjusted by the Dominion Government with as little further delay as possible."

"And, therefore, the undersigned respectfully recommend that, with the approval of council, Your Honor may see fit to bring the subject of dealing expeditiously, equitably and finally with the claims of the class of half-breeds above mentioned under the notice of His Excellency the Governor General."

That was transmitted by the North-West Council on the 14th June, 1881, with a request that it should be laid before His Excellency, and be by him placed under the consideration of his Ministers. On the 22nd July, 1881, this memorial, with the other papers relating to the half-breed claims, was laid before the Acting Minister of the Interior by the Deputy Minister of the Interior, with this memorandum :

"The undersigned submits for the information of the Acting Minister the file herewith on the subject of the claims preferred by the half-breeds in the North-West Territories to lands or scrip, following upon the grants in this behalf made by Parliament to the half-breeds of Manitoba.

"In reference to the class of half-breeds who moved from Manitoba to the North-West Territories without having received land or scrip, mentioned by Mr. Lawrence Clarke, the undersigned may state that proof as to the right of many of these people to participate in land or scrip have been investigated, but the return did not come in time to enable the persons who would appear to be entitled to participate in the land grant of 1,400,000 acres before the said grant had become entirely exhausted. It remains now for the Government to say whether they will make an additional grant to meet such claims, whether they will issue scrip and meet the demand, or, finally, whether, in view of its being, to a considerable extent, the fault of the parties themselves that their claims were not made in time, they should be refused altogether."

You will observe from that statement of the Deputy Minister of the Department, that at that time it was entirely undetermined by the Government whether they would recognise, and if so, in what shape and to what extent, these claims. He submitted the question once again on the 22nd of July, 1881, when these urgent remonstrances were presented through the North-West Council to the consideration of the Minister. From information I have received, I believe that the member for Provencher (Mr. Royal), and, amongst others, Mr. Bannatyne and Mr. Schultz, formerly a member of this House and now a member of the Senate, and others, intervened, from time to time, to press this subject upon the consideration of the Government; that there was a considerable pressure upon the Department of the Interior, which pressure, however, with a capacity for the resistance of pressure which is unsurpassed, that Department sustained immovably. There were several orders for papers, but save in one case none of those orders were complied with. On the 29th March, 1882, in answer to a motion made by Mr. Schultz, then member for Lisgar, all the claims of the half-breeds who were temporarily absent were brought down. There were 429 names of cases which, up to that time, had been investigated, and that return was laid on the Table. The pressure increased. Many of these claims were sold; more of them were pledged. Discontent had arisen; many of the claimants had removed into the Territories at various points, and another germ of trouble was created wherever a few of these men were together. They were to be found in Qu'Appelle, in the St. Laurent settlement, and at various other points in the North-West Territories, and every one of them was a man with a grievance in this respect. In 1883 the pressure was renewed, but fruitlessly. In 1884 the pressure was renewed; and on the 9th May, 1884, the Deputy Minister of the Interior made a report, recommending the settlement of those claims, and going into the whole case, and that was submitted to the Minister; but that report has not been

brought down. The Minister did not act upon that report. Nothing was done upon it at all; and even late in the year 1885 no decision was arrived at, and the outbreak of the trouble began. In March, 1885, the Deputy Minister made a second report, further pressing a settlement of those claims. At last, spurred by the rebellion—for nothing less than a rebellion seems adequate to stir up this Government—the Minister reported and recommended a settlement on the 9th of April, 1885. It was not until then that settlements were proposed by the Minister, although it was pressed in the years 1879, 1880 and 1881; although the papers had been specially laid before him in the year 1881; although the pressure was renewed in 1882, 1883 and 1884; although his own Deputy had brought the question under his consideration on the 9th May, 1884, with a report recommending immediate action; although it was well known that large numbers of those half-breeds were all through the Territories and in the disturbed quarters; although all the disturbance and agitation were known, nothing moved him, nothing stirred him, nothing could resist the great inertia that possessed him but the rebellion. But in April he moved—too late, of course, to save the trouble. Many had been disaffected by this neglect. That settlement is now going on, and 439—I suppose the 439 whose names were laid on the Table on the 29th March, 1882—half-breeds, whose cases had been investigated, are now having their cases settled; and in all about 600 have been and are to be settled in that regard. I say this brief statement I have made of the claims of the unenumerated half-breeds of Manitoba proves with equal force and cogency the neglect, delay and mismanagement which I have charged against the Government in that regard. Now, Sir, having dealt with these two classes of questions, I will touch but very briefly upon some other incidents. As I have said, it does not do to consider this matter without looking at all its bearings, and the question of representation, local and federal, was a question strongly pressed upon the attention of the Government and formed a difficulty in the Territories. But I shall not take time to deal with the details of that. So, also, with reference to the regulations affecting firewood, fencing and house timber. The regulations in the summer of 1879, caused protests and indignation in that year. There was an absurd arrangement, under which, I believe, a man had to get a permit if he wanted to light a camp fire on his way through the prairie, the practical effect of which was that he was exposed to prosecution if he did not; and other equally absurd regulations were made. In February, 1880, a petition was sent from Edmonton and Saskatchewan on that subject, and some of the regulations were cancelled. There were frequent other protests early. There was a protest in November, 1884, from Moosomin, and in September, 1884, from Prince Albert. In May, 1884, there is a strong article in *Le Manitoba* pointing out the grievances of these regulations, as they applied to the wood on the reserves for ordinary use in the old Province as well as in the new Territories. Then there was a question with reference to the mail service, which was very inadequate, and the improvement of the River Saskatchewan, for which we granted votes repeatedly, but which votes were never used. Then came the white settlers' grievances, in the Prince Albert settlement, as to their lands, which, as I have said, were in a large measure common to the half-breeds. I shall not go into them in detail. The papers on the Table prove abundantly the neglect, the bungling, the delay of the Government. The statement of these troubles includes, amongst other things, the fact that the land office was not opened until after two years after the agent was appointed; that the old settlers' claims were not satisfied, and patents were not given; that an enormous inconvenience was caused by the regulations in the unsurveyed Territories, an inconvenience far greater than existed in the surveyed Territories, because it

was impossible for the pioneer settler on unsurveyed land to know whether it was an odd or even lot that he was settling upon, and therefore he was left without security for his holding. By the application of the orders and regulations which, from time to time, were issued, to the cases of settlement, which had begun under other orders and regulations, a gross injustice was attempted to be done, and in respect to this much agitation ensued, until the wholesome principle was laid down in the year 1884, that each man's case should be treated as under the custom, law and regulation in force at the time when he made his settlement. There were delays in communicating the orders of the Department and consequent serious hardships, and very serious trouble arose to the settlers with regard to settlement duties performed in unsurveyed townships before entry, in which there was a typical case, affecting nearly 300 of other cases, in the instance of the man Miller, to which I shall refer briefly. There were delays in the surveys, and delays in settling a principle of action with regard to the settlers. Now, there was a special report by Mr. Russell, the Surveyor General, in 1877, and there were special reports in 1879 by Mr. Duck, who was appointed agent in August, 1878. No office, however, was opened. In 1880, 102 inhabitants of Prince Albert and Edmonton asked for patents to the old settlers. Mr. Duck was appointed to take evidence in 1881. He took the evidence; and in March, 1882, he reported. No action was taken on that report till 1884, and much agitation occurred meanwhile. There were not many of the old settlers, but they had settled on some of the choicest spots, which had afterwards become towns and village sites, and very numerous homesteads and titles were dependent on the question whether the titles of the old settlers would be recognised. In 1880, although the Government did not think fit to open an office, they appointed a registrar. In 1881 the report of the Minister of the Interior admits inconvenience, delay and reasonable complaints of the settlers, and says they have been enabled to provide a remedy by the appointment of the land board. In 1881 there is a memorial from the North-West Council; in June, a protest from Mr. Clarke and Rev. Father André, on the subject of opening the office, and at length, in August 1881, the office was ordered to be opened by the agent who had been two years on the spot without the office being opened. Difficulties at once arose as to the application of the various orders and regulations, which, from time to time, had been passed since settlers came in; and in October, 1881, a public meeting was held, declaring very emphatically the views of the settlers upon various points, and the resolutions were placed in the hands of Mr. Clarke, as I have already stated. I have given you the resolution relating to the extinguishment of the Indian title, and the other had regard to the claims of the settlers to their lands. From November, 1881, to April, 1882, there was correspondence with Mr. Clarke. In January, 1882, instructions were issued at Ottawa as to land entries, but those instructions were not sent to the Prince Albert agent till the summer of 1882; and inasmuch as they altered the condition of things, and established a new state of things, they inflicted great hardship and difficulty, as Mr. Pearce reported. On 27th March, 1882, Lieutenant Governor Dewdney pressed for early action, and pointed out that delays were complicating settlement, and enclosed a letter from Mr. Macdowall, at Prince Albert, in that sense. In the Session of 1882 and 1883 came a petition to this House, signed by 394 settlers, and in the Session 1883 came the debate upon my motion with respect to that petition, to which I will refer presently. In April, 1883, there was the report of Mr. Russell, recommending a plan of settlement. In July, 1883, it was proposed that Mr. Russell should go there; he had been ill since February previous. In October, 1883, the North-West Council memorialised the Government

copy

to expedite the settlement of the claims at Prince Albert. In October, 1883, there was a meeting at Prince Albert, at which strong resolutions were passed. In that month the Minister himself reports :

"Settlement of this question without further delay is of the utmost importance to the settlers, and I propose the land board and Mr. Pearce shall act."

In the winter of 1883-84 there was agitation, meetings and articles in the press. On 15th January, 1884, Mr. Pearce commenced an investigation at Prince Albert, and in the course of between six and seven weeks he accomplished the whole enquiry into all these cases at Prince Albert—I speak not of St. Laurent—which had been the subject of agitation, difficulty and that hope deferred which maketh the heart sick, and the want of which enquiry had produced so much discontent and trouble. In March, 1884, having gone down to Winnipeg, he sent his report to the Minister. In April, 1884, the Minister approved that report, and directed the settlement to proceed. I am not now entering at all into the principle of the settlement; I have been dealing solely with the mode in which the business was conducted. I have brought you down to the point at which Mr. Pearce, in six weeks, dealt with all those cases, comprising more than 1,000 affidavits and many hundreds of claims; and the Minister approved the report, and ordered the settlement to proceed. Unhappily, most unhappily, St. Laurent was not embraced in the report, at that time, and the cause of that I shall have to point out later. I now advert, for an instant, to a particular type of claim, to the Miller type, not in the interest of one individual settler, but because it appears from the official reports to be typical of about 300 cases. The old settlers, before the survey, were, by law, entitled to enter and have the benefit of residence upon land as part of their homesteading period. But in 1879 the Department, unfortunately, alleged that this was against the law; they directed it should not be done. The result was, that the settlers did not enter within the three months provided after townships were open for settlement. Had they not been, in effect, deceived by this notice, they would have entered and got the benefit of their past residence. But they were only given three months, and being deceived by the notice from the Department, only five entries were made in Prince Albert and St. Laurent, instead of nearly 300. Correspondence ensued. Questions passed from Prince Albert to the Department, and back again, and it actually seemed utterly impossible to make the Department comprehend the difficulty. I wish I had time to read the letters; I hope they will be read before this debate closes, for they show how utterly impossible it was to get the Department to understand the difficulty and apply a proper remedy. It was not until four years afterwards—from 1879 up to 1883—that it was found possible to get the Department to understand the matter and apply a remedy. In fact, it was not until another visit had been made by Mr. Pearce, in 1884, that a settlement was arrived at, or no less than five years since the difficulty arose. You can perhaps, hardly understand the trouble caused by this bungling. Amongst the grievances complained of by both whites and half-breeds was the large reserves. The country was unsurveyed, and you could not, therefore, tell the odd or even sections. But in 1879 the odd sections were reserved for railway purposes; and if a man took up a section, he did not know at what price or on what terms he would be able to obtain it if it should prove an odd section. The same trouble arose in regard to Hudson Bay sections and school sections. Then there came the enormous Canadian Pacific Railway reserve. The company obtained a reserve of the odd sections in a tract of nearly 40,000,000 acres. Then there were the colonisation companies tracts near the settlements and partly settled. Then the pretence was made that settlers on even sections must deal with the companies; and that colonisation companies had some rights in respect

to those sections, as to which the Government alleged, and the terms of their agreement showed, that they had no special right, and this pretence known to the Government to be set up by the colonisation companies, this effort represented to the Government that the colonisation companies were persuading the people that they must deal with them, was fostered and promoted by the Government, by the system complained of by the North-West Council and others, of appointing, for that particular purpose, whomsoever might be the agent of the colonisation company to be the Government agent. Well, he was not paid as a Government agent; he was the colonisation company's agent, but he was given double power, power as Government agent too, which, of course, helped the colonisation companies in this mode of treating settlers. Now, there were many remonstrances upon this subject. Many of the earlier remonstrances to which I have already alluded touched upon this question also, but I shall refer only to some of the later ones. In the *Saskatchewan Herald* of 3rd of July, 1881, there was an editorial upon these regulations :

"One omission in the regulations that seriously affects the pioneer is that no provision is made for those who have taken up land in advance of the survey, except in the case of parties who may settle on railway lands to the north of the line, who will be allowed to purchase a quantity not exceeding 320 acres, at \$1.25 an acre. It is admitted on all hands that to the pioneers are due the credit of proving to the world how admirably adapted our inland plains are for settlement. By their enterprise the clouds of darkness that have for many years wrapped their capabilities in gloom have been dispelled; and surely they are entitled to some consideration. Sir John A. Macdonald, in his report, as Minister of the Interior, admits 'that squatters are not, as a rule, speculators, but in the majority of instances prove industrious and valuable cultivators of the soil, and as such are entitled to receive protection.' It is gratifying to hear this admission from Sir John, and he would have won himself the goodwill of every one of the squatters, and given a great impetus to them as cultivators of the soil, if he had given effect to his views, by providing a protection to which he admits they are entitled. It is impossible to survey this vast country all at once, and it is also impossible to confine settlement within prescribed limits. One of the causes that, in some cases, operate against making extensive permanent improvements, is the fear that the settler entertains that he finds himself on a lot reserved for some special purpose, such for instance as on a school or Hudson Bay lot. The great object to be attained is the settlement of the country, which can best be secured by the encouragement of those who lead the van in the forward march of civilisation, and this can most effectively be done by the introduction into the regulations of a clause providing that where a settler finds himself on one or the other of these lots, he should be allowed to keep it, giving to the school fund or the company an equivalent in land elsewhere. This would meet the case, and cause no embarrassment to the Department. The opinion of Sir John on the value of the squatter justified the change asked for, and its introduction would give light and force to the policy that allows the expenditure of large sums of money for the introduction of immigrants from beyond the sea."

The petition of the settlers of Prince Albert and vicinity, of 1882 and 1883, has the following clause :—

"And whereas, prior to the 9th of October, 1879, all lands in the North-West Territories, whether odd or even-numbered, were opened for purchase or homestead, and many of your petitioners took up even-numbered sections, cultivated and improved the same, with the intention of purchasing them at the then Government price, but in consequence of an Order in Council at the date last aforesaid, are prohibited from purchasing the same."

It also says :

"Some of your petitioners, prior to survey, took up claims which they cultivated and improved, and which, after survey, were found to be on sections reserved by the Government or the Hudson Bay Company, and are now threatened with ejection by the company, unless they deliver up possession thereof. Your petitioners consider that a great injustice would be done these settlers if turned off their claims without compensation."

There is also a clause as to the colonisation companies. When I brought this subject up in the House, in 1883, on the 7th of March, I said :

"It is also suggested that colonisation companies surround the district, and the agents of these companies have taken care to forbid all immigrants from going on their lands; and the result has been that many intending settlers have departed and gone across the line."

The hon. gentleman, in answer to that statement, said :

"We cannot help it if people act under the impression that colonisation companies can keep them off their tracts. Land jobbers and land speculators may tell the people, 'These lands belong to us; and some persons are frightened enough to buy off their claim, whether it is good

poor

or not. We cannot help that. All I can say with reference to these colonisation companies is that there is not anything to prevent any settler going in and settling on an even-numbered lot, under the general regulations, making his entry and getting his patent at the end of three years."

But, as I have already stated, the attitude of the colonisation companies was notorious, and that attitude was encouraged and rendered effectual by the appointment of their agents as the Government agents for the tract. On the 9th of October, 1883, a memorial was forwarded to the Governor General by the North-West Council, containing this clause :

"The reservations held by the Government at Regina and Moose Jaw, and the reserve known as the Mile Belt reserve, are detrimental to growth and prosperity; large blocks of land being held by the Government, and settlers being debarred from locating upon them, paralyse the expansive force of this young country, and by bounding the railway tract, comparatively uninhabited, give the traveller a false idea of the North-West, and an inadequate and sometimes a misleading impression of the character of the soil. Your memorialists are aware, too, that many *bond fide* settler, have located on lands included on these reserves, innocent of any order to the contrary, and have, in many cases, been driven from their claims, and in others have been prevented from obtaining those advantages which the inducement held out by the Government led them to expect. Your memorialists, therefore, pray that immediate action be taken to remove these barriers to the development of the country."

And they also make this declaration :

"That the system of granting immense tracts of the choicest lands of the Territories to colonisation companies is inimical to the best interests of the country. Your memorialists, therefore, pray that no more such grants be made; that the companies now holding the same be compelled to fulfil the conditions imposed on them in letter and in spirit; and that the agents of the companies be not allowed to act as the agents of the Government in any respect; that granting lands already thickly settled, as in the case of the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land Company, is contrary to the intention of the Land Act; that the company profits to an undue extent by the energy and forsooth of the pioneers of the country, who are prevented from reaping the advantages of their own labors, in that the odd-numbered sections are locked up for speculative purposes, which would otherwise be open for settlement, or held for sale by the Government on reasonable terms. Your memorialists, therefore, pray that Your Excellency's Government will enquire into the matter and redress the above grievances."

The other day the First Minister gave, with reference to the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Company, a statement as to the settlers. The surveys of that company's tract were approved on the 25th of June, 1883, as to the bulk, on the 12th of February, 1883, and the 2nd of April, 1883, as to the remainder, and the surveyor who went on it and surveyed it reported 44 settlers on that tract, so that there were that many before it was surveyed. The Inspector of Colonisation Companies reported 49 settlers prior to the commencement of settlement by the company. This is an instance of mistaken action. At the October meeting, in 1883, at Prince Albert, a resolution was passed, endorsing the memorial of the North-West colony, asking the annulment of grants of land made to colonisation companies of lands previously settled on. On the 29th of February, 1884, a public meeting was held at Colleston's school house, Prince Albert, Mr. Macdowall, the representative of the district in the council, being present to explain his course, and the second resolution passed was this :

"That we view with alarm the action of the Government in reserving large tracts of land in this locality for the use of colonisation companies, town sites or other purposes, and desire that as soon as possible all lands in the North-West Territories shall be held for homesteads to actual settlers only."

Then there was a meeting held at Moosomin, in December, 1874, at which the following resolution was passed :—

"The principle of allowing individuals or corporations to control large tracts of land being prejudicial, advantage of any failure on the part of colonisation companies already organised to faithfully fulfil conditions, should be seized to cancel their claims."

Now, Sir, so much with reference to the general and the particular case of the Edmonton company. But I wish to give you two special instances, some facts which are within my reach. Take the case of the Qu'Appelle half-breeds, as to whom there are numerous papers brought down. On the 5th of May, 1873, there was an address presented by the

half-breeds of Qu'Appelle to Lieutenant Governor Morris, asking for protection in respect of their holdings. In 1874, when the Indian treaty was made, Mr. Laird, the Minister of Interior, and Mr. Morris, were at Qu'Appelle, and the half-breeds sent in a petition to Lieutenant Governor Morris, for the recognition of their holdings along the rivers. Lieutenant Governor Morris, under authority, assured them that their holdings would be respected, and enclosed the papers to Ottawa. In October, 1874, Father Decorby, of Qu'Appelle, wrote to the Minister of the Interior to the same effect, as to holdings on streams. At this time no Indian reserves were set apart, and no surveys had been made. In the summer of 1881 a petition was sent to the Governor General from 112 of the Qu'Appelle half-breeds, which states :

"That when Her Majesty's commissioners came here, in the autumn of 1874, to treat with the Indians of this region, they, on behalf of Her Majesty, gave a promise to your petitioners that their rights would be recognised and respected. Your petitioners, therefore, pray that the Government will be pleased to cause a survey to be made of their present holdings, similar to the old settlers' claims on the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, in the Province of Manitoba, allotting to each actual settler a certain number of acres, fronting on the lakes or rivers as the case may happen, throughout the settlement, and running two miles back north or south as the case may be, with a privilege of two miles additional for hay and wood purposes."

That was acknowledged and promised to be considered on the 20th September, 1881, but no action was taken on it. On the 29th August, 1882, Governor Dewdney telegraphed to Sir John A. Macdonald from Qu'Appelle as follows :—

"Half-breed holding old claims in valley waited on me to-day and complained that Osler Land Company are warning them off, and claiming their lands. Would recommend that this company be notified not to interfere with them. Have written."

On that day a petition had been presented to Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney from these half-breeds, in these terms :

"That as far back as the year 1860 and up to 1879 we settled or squatted on land situate on the banks of the Qu'Appelle River, erected comfortable dwellings and out buildings thereon, ploughed and cultivated the soil, and by continued residence have complied with all the Government conditions.

"2. That we have erected a church and school in a central position, built and opened up roads and bridges, and made numerous improvements, which are to-day of great value to the new settlers,

"3. That the surveys lately made have discovered some of us to be on railway land now owned by the Ontario and Qu'Appelle Land Co., whose agent has informed us that we must either buy the lands from them or move off. In fact, we are informed that they have sold some of the land at present occupied by a *bond fide* settler.

"4. That we have refused to comply with the request of the Ontario and Qu'Appelle Land Co., and claim a patent from the Crown for our respective pieces of land, or quarter sections, fully believing that we are justly and legally entitled to the same.

"5. We would therefore respectfully ask Your Honor to lay our claims before the right hon. Minister of the Interior, who, we know, will do us justice in the matter, and request his earliest attention and answer."

On the 29th August, 1882, Lieutenant Governor Dewdney enclosed that petition to the Minister of the Interior, with these words :

"The declarations set forth in the petition are, to my knowledge, generally correct. I have informed the petitioners that I will duly communicate to them your answer in connection with the said petition.

"With reference to their claims, I yesterday had the honor to address a telegram to you, and the recommendation therein contained I now beg to reiterate.

"As I glean that many of the claims are somewhat conflicting, and in some instances run part on even and part on odd-numbered sections, I would respectfully suggest that either Mr. Commissioner Walsh or Mr. Inspector Pearce be instructed to examine into and adjust them on an equitable basis, and that without delay, as the half-breeds interested are very uneasy about their holdings, and may be looked upon as the pioneers of the district."

That letter was written, Sir, on the 29th of August, 1882, It was acknowledged, and was to be submitted to the Minister on his return to the Department. On 19th March, 1883, Lieutenant Governor Dewdney writes again, saying :

"Last summer I forwarded a petition from the half-breeds in reference to their claims in this district to the Department of Interior, on the occasion of a claim being made by the Qu'Appelle and Ontario Land Company to some of their land.

"There are a number of half-breeds in this district who have been settled in the Qu'Appelle valley for many years. These went on their

usual hunt for buffalo, returning to their homes at different times during each year. Others have settled since 1879, and have remained pretty constantly on their lands.

"The Dominion land surveys have demonstrated that many of them have been living on the same section, and as land became valuable a scramble was made by land speculators to obtain the right, titles and interest of those settled in the most favored locality.

"The sooner the claims of these half-breeds are determined the better, as a number of them are *bona fide* settlers and deserve consideration.

"These settlers have not claimed their land, as was done in some parts of the North-West, by small frontages running back some miles, although the bulk of them built their homesteads close to each other and near the water, where they could easily catch fish. They, however, consider they are entitled to as much land in area as they would have had if they had taken up their claims, as had been the custom with half-breeds."

And then he states the difficulty, suggesting a plan of settlement, and suggests that if the question is left to arbitration it should be left to some independent man. Now I have told you of Mr. Dewdney's telegram of August and his letter of August, 1882, in which he requested this pressing case to be considered. Do you know when that letter was answered? It was answered on the 6th of July, 1883, ten months after the date of its receipt, and its answer was:

"I am directed by the Minister of the Interior to send you herewith the enclosed copies of the correspondence concerning the claims of certain half-breed settlers in the Qu'Appelle valley, and to request that you will, at your convenience, investigate and report upon these claims."

And the reference to Mr. Commissioner Walsh took place on that 6th of July, 1882—the letter is here. So that this pressing case, referred to by the Lieutenant Governor of the Territories, by telegram and letter, remained for ten months, although he had suggested a reference to Commissioner Walsh, without the Department possessing sufficient animation either to order the reference or to answer the letter; and it was not until the expiration of that period that the step was taken, even, of ordering the reference. Then Mr. Jackson, the member of the council for the district, on 8th December, 1883, says:

"You will pardon the liberty I now take in addressing you privately, when I tell you that it is at the urgent request of a large deputation of half-breeds that I do so. They, in common with the country, have heard of the generally satisfactory settlement of the mile belt and reserve question, —"

You know, the satisfactory settlement was, that the wrong was undone, as far as it could be, after a while—

"and urge perhaps with reason, that if their own grievances, upon which the Government have been repeatedly petitioned and memorialised, were brought personally to your notice, some immediate action would be taken. Under any circumstances, there would not be very many to deal with, and the settlement of their claims need not be a troublesome one; but there are half-breeds in the Territories who have never received anything from the Government, and who, it has been admitted, are entitled to some consideration."

On 13th March, 1884, after a more reasonable interval of delay—only three months this time—Mr. Hall, the secretary, informed Mr. Jackson that the letter was duly received, and he says:

"The Minister has himself been very anxious to have this question settled, and on the 18th September last Mr. A. Walsh, commissioner of Dominion lands at Winnipeg, was instructed to visit this locality, and make an investigation into the claims of these half-breeds, and other matters. Owing, however, to an unusual pressure of business, Mr. Walsh has so far been unable to visit this locality, but he has again been written to and requested to make this investigation at the earliest possible opportunity."

Now, Sir, so far as I can ascertain, these claims were only settled under the pressure of the rebellion in April, 1885, because the very principle of the decision is that which was discussed by telegram and letter between Mr. Street and Mr. Macpherson, after Mr. Street has reached Winnipeg. The questions how much should be given to them on the water, and on what terms they should have the lands outside, were only settled in April, 1885. There is a combined instance of neglect to settle old claims, and trouble arising out of the reserves. And may I be permitted to enquire if these delays took place when the Minister was so very anxious, what would have been the case if he had not possessed such a

tender interest? Then, I turn to the case of the Prince Albert Colonisation Company. That company's tract of land is in the immediate vicinity of these troubles. And the facts, so far as I have been able to gather them, are briefly these: In 1882 Mr. J. White, M.P., East Hastings, and Mr. J. C. Jamieson, of the *Belleville Intelligencer*, procured the passage of an Order in Council in favor of the projected company, and an agreement for some very choice lands. That agreement was made in June, 1882, and it was intended and provided by the charter of the company that they should also deal in lumber limits and coal lands. It was arranged, on the formation of the company, that the profits should be divided into twelve shares, or parts, of which two were to be what are called, in the parlance of these jobbers, "blind." The shareholders, other than White and Jamieson, were to advance the needed money, and White and Jamieson were to receive each one-twelfth of the net profits, without making any advance or incurring any risk. This agreement, by which they were to receive one-twelfth part of the profits, was in consideration of the fact that they had procured the Order in Council and forwarded the company's interests; and in virtue of the agreement, that they were to continue to assist and promote the interests of the company. It was a versatile company, not confining itself to its specific line, but intending to dabble in timber limits and coal lands as well. The hon. the Minister of Customs knew all about this arrangement. The company found that another river township would be valuable, and these gentlemen, in 1883, applied for an exchange, and obtained an Order in Council in the fall of 1883, whereby they got township 45, range 27, west of 2nd meridian in exchange for township 43 in the same range. That was a township on the Saskatchewan of extraordinary value. Mr. Jamieson was secretary of the company at \$600 a year; the other shareholders advanced all the money necessary to pay to the Government its 20,000 odd dollars. The land grant was not surveyed at the date of the original application, and with the exception of township 45, which I have just mentioned, a survey of which was approved in December, 1882, no surveys were approved before the fall of 1883. The First Minister gave the dates of the approvals as follow:

| |
|--|
| Tp. 45a, R. 26, w. 2nd Mer., surveyed season '83; approved 18th Sept., '83 |
| " 46a " 26 " " May, '83 " 19th April, '84 |
| " 46a " 27 " " season '83 " 18th Sept., '83 |
| " 45 " 27 " " " 22nd Dec., '82 |
| " 44 " 28 " " Feb. '83 " 18th July, '83 |
| " 46a " 28 " " March, '83 " 15th Nov., '82 |
| " 43 " 28 " " season '83; not approved. |

The inspector of colonisation companies reported twenty-nine settlers on the tract, and I believe he reported also a church site on it. The company never did anything that I have been able to find out; the bulk of the twenty-nine settlers went in on township 45, range 27, west 2nd meridian, which is the river township to which I have referred. Its name is the parish of St. Louis de Langevin. Who is its patron saint? I hope the hon. Minister of Public Works will consider of its case. A church and a mission were established here, and the names of most of the settlers on the tract will be found on some of the petitions which I will have presently to read to the House, and on some still more melancholy lists afterwards. The company found the settlers there, and the settlers who hold these river lots held the key of the position. The company asked the Government, during the Session of 1884, to give them possession or to exchange for other vacant land, or to refund the money; but the Minister refused, saying the matter was in the company's hands, as they had the right and title to the land and could eject. In 1884, about the end of February, the company applied again for relief; they wanted their money back; the Minister refused, telling them they had the right and title to eject. They declined to eject, saying it would raise a rebellion, and the matter became more unsettled than ever. The agreement with

poor

the company and its title prevented the settlement by the Government of several claims of settlers on the tract, and amongst them are to be found several of the insurgents who fought in the different fights in the neighborhood of Batoche. Some of the settlers were in before 1880, some in 1881, some in 1882, and others in 1883 and 1884. This tract passes just behind that range of country which takes in Gabriel's Crossing, Batoche and St. Laurent. To the northward of that range the river takes a great curve, and this tract of territory, running just behind the river range, strikes the river to the northward, where is St. Louis de Langevin, and as far as I can judge from the map, it was across a portion of this company's tract that the march was made into Batoche, and it was over its lands that the fighting began and the guns were fired. According to Mr. Stephenson's report of last year, it is a very fine property indeed; the soil is choice, and its proximity to the river gives it peculiar advantages. So fine a property should never have been granted, and never would, I suppose, but for the special circumstances to which I have referred. Nor is this the only case in which grants were made on like conditions and understandings; for if you take the Shell River Colonisation Company, I believe you can find repeated there the earlier part of the history I have just given. Now, I turn to the question specially of the claims of the half-breeds to their holdings, and the claims, both of the whites and half-breeds, in respect of surveys, the claims particularly for river lot surveys and special surveys; and I must say the series of papers is so very defective that I counted myself about 30 palpable omissions in this series, but from what information we have can be gathered certain results that are tolerably plain. So long ago as June, 1873, it appears there was an interview on the part of Bishop Grandin with the First Minister and the Minister of Public Works; and in September, 1873, a letter was written by the bishop, following that interview, to the Governor General, an important letter, as I judge from the subsequent references; but I cannot say more of it than that, because, unfortunately, it is not brought down. The reply to that letter was through the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, and that reply is not brought down. In June, 1874, Governor Morris encloses a statement of Mr. McKay, as to affairs in Prince Albert. In 1875 Bishop Grandin writes a long letter to the Minister of the Interior, in which he refers to the uneasiness of the half-breed people, their suspicion of the Government, and his efforts to disabuse their minds of the idea of leaving the country. In July, 1875, the Hon. Mr. Laird replied very fully to that letter. He referred to the expected legislation under the Territories Acts of 1874, and to the desire of the Government to deal justly by the people. In January, 1876, Bishop Grandin replied, stating the uneasiness and distrust had disappeared, and the Métis were settling down in the North-West Territories and had abandoned the plan a great many of them had formed of going across the lines. Major Walker writes, on the 29th of December, 1876, to Governor Laird, from Carlton, that many disputes about lands in and near Prince Albert had arisen; that a survey was necessary, and he recommended strongly a survey of St. Albert and St. Laurent, which are in the same position. This would save disputes and ill-feeling. In February, 1877, Governor Laird transmits that letter, saying the subject was one affecting the prosperity of the settlement, and hoping the labors of the special survey will be continued and points fixed. He adds that where settlements are along the bank of rivers, it is proper to adapt the surveys to the country, giving an average of ten to twenty chains frontage, the lots running back 160 acres, and that where settlements are along the river, the system of survey on Red and Assinobine will have to be conceded.

He suggests that settlers should be allowed their frontages with depth enough to make 160 acres; that settlers before transfer should not be obliged to wait three years under Homestead Act, and that Battleford should be surveyed. The Surveyor General, in March 1877, reports on this letter as follows: 1st. The special survey is to be extended to the settlements on the Saskatchewan that season. 2nd. Where settlements are on rivers, it is proposed to adapt the survey to the locality, giving an average, where practicable, of ten or twenty chains frontage, lots running back 160 acres. 3rd. Relief should be given to old settlers, as to their patents, and legislation is needed for that purpose; and Battleford is to be surveyed next year. On the 26th March, 1877, Mr. Mills, Minister of Interior, writes to Governor Laird enclosing that report and endorsing its suggestions. About the beginning of 1878 there is a petition from 151 inhabitants of Prince Albert, stating that the settlement is growing, that land disputes are arising, and surveys are wanted; and, as to the river settlement, requesting a narrow frontage and a depth of two miles the same privilege as given to old settlers in Manitoba. In January, 1878, another petition was sent from Prince Albert for surveys; and, of course, I need hardly say that many of these claims were common to whites and half-breeds. It may be convenient here to point out that there were different plans of survey: first, the general plan; second, the special settlement and town site plan; and third, the river front plan, on the general system applicable to the locality, which was, as you will see, ten chains front by eighty chains in depth. On the 1st February, 1878, there was a public meeting of the settlers of St. Laurent, at which Gabriel Dumont was president and Alexander Fisher secretary, and amongst the resolutions presented in form of a petition was this one:

"That it is of urgent consequence that the Government should cause to be surveyed, with the least possible delay, the lands occupied and cultivated by the Métis and the other old settlers, and that the said lands should be granted to them."

They also asked for implements and seed grain, giving reasons for their poverty. On the 13th February, 1878, Governor Laird transmits this petition, saying:

"It is important that the land policy of the Government towards old settlers and others living for many years in the Territory should be declared. It appears to me that they have a claim to some more speedy means of acquiring a title for settlement purposes than the homestead provisions of the Dominion Lands Act. To prevent disputes between neighbors, it is highly desirable that the survey of lands settled upon along the principal rivers should be prosecuted with all convenient speed."

On the 13th March, 1878, these papers were referred to the Surveyor General for his report, and he reported thus:

"That it is intended that the several subjects affecting Dominion lands alluded to shall be discussed during Mr. L. Russell's visit to the Saskatchewan in the course of the ensuing season, the result of the discussion to be reported by Mr. Russell, with a view to legislation or other action."

And on the 18th March, 1878, the Minister of the Interior replied to Governor Laird:

"The propriety of passing an Act to secure for the half-breeds some more speedy means of acquiring a title for settlement purposes than under the provisions of the present homestead and Dominion lands law has for some time engaged my attention. As regards the application of the petitioners for an early survey of the settled lands along the principal rivers, I have to request you to inform the petitioners that the survey of such lands has already been carried out, to some extent, and will be prosecuted as rapidly as the funds at the disposal of the Department will permit."

In March, 1878, there was a petition of French Canadians and half-breeds of St. Albert, referring to the petition of St. Laurent, and alleging:

"That it is of the greatest importance that the Government cause to be surveyed, with as little delay as possible, the lands occupied and cultivated by the half-breeds or old residents of the country, and that patents for the said lands be granted to them."

That was transmitted on the 10th April by Mr. Laird, and during the seasons of 1877 and 1878 special surveys were made of Prince Albert and at St. Laurent. The Saskatchewan *Herald*, of the 25th August, 1878, contains this statement:

"Mr. Montague Aldous and Mr. J. L. Reid are engaged in surveying the old settlement belt. They take, as a starting point, the front corner post, agreed upon by the owners of the respective claims as being their boundary, from which a line is run north and south, giving each farm an average depth of two miles, with whatever frontage was originally claimed."

There is a report from Mr. Russell, which is not brought down, but which is frequently alluded to, in the year 1877, and which, from the allusions made to it, obviously contained detailed statements of the condition of the settlers of Prince Albert, and possibly of St. Laurent. There is also a detailed report of Mr. Aldous for 1878, which is not brought down, but is alluded to as if it contained such information. That was the condition of things in 1878, that the survey of the special settlement has been gone through, and the papers show that the survey of St. Laurent—not, of course, the whole neighborhood of St. Laurent, but of St. Laurent parish—the special survey—was approved by the Government in March, 1879, obviously, therefore, having been completed during the season of 1878. On the 30th November, 1878, land agent Duck writes to the Interior Department as to the Prince Albert settlement survey:

"I ask advice as to the amount of river frontage allowed individual settlers: that is, can I allow a settler to homestead and preempt two quarter sections, both having a river frontage?"

He goes on to say there are a large number of settlers anxious to make the necessary entries to secure themselves. The Department replied, on the 14th January, 1879:

"The rule with respect to river front lots is that they are ten chains in width; one of these can be taken as a homestead claim and another as a preemption by the same person. In surveying the townships fronting on the Saskatchewan, all river lots will be posted in ten chains widths, with a depth back from the river of two miles. The departure from this rule that has been made in the case of the holdings of older settlers in Prince Albert and other places was made in view that the intention of the Government so to lay out the lands on the river had not been made generally known previous to their occupation. But, in the present and all future time, people are to understand that no one can hold, in any manner, more land on the river than I have above indicated, that is to say, twenty chains as homestead and preemption."

I wish you to mark this statement, given for the information of the people as to the general plan which was adopted with reference to the river lots. It was that each lot should be 10 chains by 80 chains, and that no one in future time could hold more than 10 chains as a homestead and 10 chains as a preemption:

"A petition was given me to lay before the Minister of this Department, from certain settlers eastward of the main Prince Albert settlement, to be permitted to retain their lands with the half mile width of frontage, in which manner they had taken up and occupied them. I have not yet succeeded in having this granted, although I have favorably recommended it, in view of the reason before stated, that in taking up the lands they did so in accordance with the published regulations of the Dominion Lands Act, setting forth the system of their survey. Should any enquiry be made of you by the parties interested, you may inform them that the matter is still in abeyance."

You will observe that we get no more information about that particular petition, but it is a petition of persons who had taken up their lots according to the general law, according to the quarter-section principle; and they said: Let us have them; but at that time the Government had a settled policy as to granting only river lots on rivers, and although the officer thought they ought to have them, having taken them up before the notice was given, he had been unable to obtain that concession for them; but the general principle is perfectly clearly stated. In the Dominion Lands Act of 1879, the 16th section, after declaring: "That nothing in this Act shall be construed to prevent the lands upon the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, surrendered by the Indians to the late Earl of Selkirk," from being surveyed, and so on, proceeds:

"Or to prevent fractional sections or lands bordering on any river, lake or other watercourse, from being divided, or such lands from being laid out in lots of any certain frontage or depth, in such manner as may be desirable, or to prevent the sub-division of sections, or other legal sub-divisions, into wood lots, or from describing the said lands upon the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, or such sub-divisions of fractional sections or other lots, or wood lots, for patents, by numbers answering to a plan of record, or by metes and bounds, or by both, as may seem expedient."

So that that principle which I have read you as laid down by the Department was expressly authorised by the Dominion Lands Act, which created an exception in the case of lands bordering on rivers, giving to the Department power to survey them as might be deemed advisable. In 1879 Mr. W. F. King, who was in charge of a special survey, reports that he began work on the 19th June, and then he says:

"Having received no instructions on winter work, I left Lac la Biche on the 8th October."

The Saskatchewan *Herald* of the 3rd November, 1879, thus observes in regard to this:

"Mr. W. F. King, of the special survey, lately passed east on his way to Ottawa. It seems wasteful and injudicious, in view of the rapid extension of settlements westward and the urgent necessity that exists for laying out Indian reserves, to keep surveyors tramping up and down from Ottawa half across the continent every year, causing the loss of the best working part of the season. There are many kinds of work that could, at a very trifling expense, be done as well in winter as in summer. In coming from Ottawa to Edmonton district, a party just gets nicely settled to work when it is time to start home. Supplies cannot be furnished here cheaper than they can be freighted out by the Government."

On the 5th July, 1880, the Saskatchewan *Herald* further observes, on the mode of conducting the surveys:

"If no party can be despatched from Ottawa this season in time to do the work, it might be entrusted to some of the special survey staff who will be wintering in the country. Every consideration of progress favors the encouragement of settlement to that point elected by the people; but when the impulse of the people agrees with the plans of the Government, it is difficult to find a reason why the neighborhood should not be surveyed at the earliest possible moment."

About this time, in the year 1880, certain inhabitants of Prince Albert petitioned, and in their petition they asked:

"The same consideration as is extended to settlers on river lots in Manitoba and the North-West Territories, and to other settlers on the Saskatchewan; saying that some have improved in 1874, some in 1879, and some in the present year; and asking for a speedy survey of 2 chains front and 80 chains depth, as others hereabouts."

On the 27th September, 1880, the Saskatchewan *Herald* says:

"The Government has ordered the survey of a quantity of land in the Carrot River country, so as to have it ready for the expected emigration next year. It is wise policy to afford every facility to incoming settlers at the points on which public attention is centring; and the principle might be advantageously extended so as to take in those settlements in the west whose chief drawback is that they are not surveyed, and where, for that reason, extensive and permanent improvements are kept back. The land at Prince Albert, St. Laurent, Carlton and Duck Lake has been surveyed for some years; much has been taken up by settlers squatting upon it; yet the land office at Prince Albert has not been opened for the receipt of applications for homesteads, to the great detriment of these settlements. The survey of the town site of Battleford, and of a few townships around it and Edmonton, would contribute, in no small degree, to the benefit of the country at large, by providing on the spot much of the supplies required for the Mounted Police and the Indians."

On the 15th September, 1880, the Saskatchewan *Herald* contains a description of the handsome shop just finished by Batoche, at Batoche's ferry, and it states that:

"Crops at Duck Lake are generally of the most satisfactory character and the settlement is progressing rapidly. Most of the lots are taken up. Great inconvenience and no small amount of unpleasantness among neighbors are due to the impossibility of making the homestead entries, although the land has been surveyed for some years. Steam grist and saw mill, and steam threshing mill, just brought in."

Now, Sir, I would like, had I the time and strength, here to tell you the story of the Battleford surveys. It is really a

door

most interesting episode, for it indicates the character of the dealings of the Department; but I pass it by, and proceed to deal with the question of the half-breeds at Duck Lake and vicinity. In June, 1881, a petition was presented by Rev. Father André to the Lieutenant Governor in Council, which is as follows:—

"In presenting this petition to your hon. body, allow me to observe that I came to Battleford, urged not only by my own grievance, but by the entreaties of the half-breed population about Duck Lake and St. Laurent, and they joined their earnest prayers to mine to call your special attention to the unsatisfactory state of the land question in the country. Disputes and difficulties are continually arising touching the limits and rights of property of landholders in the country, and there is no proper authority to settle these questions, however, conducive to the peace and tranquillity of the country. The land has almost entirely been surveyed in the electoral district of Lorne for now over two years, and a land office has been in existence in Prince Albert for nearly four years; but as the land agent is not authorised to enter claims or to issue patents, the settlers have no way to secure the lands they hold in possession, and which they have improved through considerable expense and exertion."

Then there is a reference to the judicial difficulties. He goes on:

"I beg your indulgence to be obliged to make you acquainted with a grievance of mine which, however, may give you an idea of the state of things calling for a prompt remedy. I hold at Duck Lake a tract of land of about twenty acres, of which I have been in peaceful possession for two years. The land was fenced in and cost me a great deal of money, and was always respected as the Catholic mission's property at that lake. I was one of the first settlers at that place, and through my exertions the settlement increased rapidly, and nobody ever troubled me in my lawful possession of that land, until last March, when a man by the name of J. Kelly jumped my claim, and notwithstanding my protestations, claimed the land as his own, and took the frame of a house upon it, depriving me, in that manner, of half my property. And this is not the only occurrence of the kind at that lake."

"As your honourable body is now assembled at Battleford to legislate upon such measures as will, in your prudence and wisdom, be more suitable to promote the good and welfare of this country, allow me to call upon you to use all your influence and authority to draw the attention of the Government, at Ottawa upon this state of things, and to urge upon them the necessity of taking such prompt measure as will relieve the people of the burden of this grievance, because if not promptly attended to, things may become grave and serious. Wishing the best success to your good will to promote the welfare of the country, and so forth."

At the same time there was a petition from Mr. Clarke from Prince Albert, 1881, asking for the opening of the land office. On the 14th of June the Lieutenant Governor transmits these two petitions, and uses this language:

"Apart from the representations in the memorials in question, I am aware that serious disputes are arising in the Prince Albert, St. Laurent and Duck Lake settlements, regarding claims to land, and I would therefore respectfully urge that in so far as it may be consistent with the policy of the Dominion Government the prayer of the memorials may receive early consideration."

Atlast, upon the pressure of these memorials, after an interval of two years after the appointment of an agent and more than two years after a portion of the survey, the office was ordered to be opened, and in August, 1881, it was opened. On the 11th March, 1882, Mr. Duck, the land agent, writes:

"SIR.—As the majority of the settlers on the south branch of the River Saskatchewan, in the vicinity of the parish of St. Laurent, have taken up their lands previous to the survey, with narrow frontages, similar to those river claims in other parts of this district, and in view of the difficulty likely to be experienced in this office in adjusting the boundaries of these claims in accordance with the sectional survey, I have at the request of several of the settlers so situated, the honor to request information as to the possibility of re-surveying these sections into river lots on a similar plan to that adopted on the Prince Albert settlement, none of these claims having as yet been entered in this office."

Now, then, the office was opened, as I have said, in August, 1881. No claims had been entered in March, 1882, and the settlers brought forward this request. I have shown you the policy of the Government, as stated in 1879, with reference to river lots on the Saskatchewan. A section survey was made of part of the St. Laurent settlement—I do not speak of the special survey on the river in the neighborhood of St. Laurent; settlers had taken their lots, according to the recognised custom, in the narrow frontages, but without survey at all, and they called for a survey according to the

old custom and the system which had been recognised in 1879. Now, Sir, it took seven months and a-half to answer that letter. On the 21st of October, 1882, the secretary writes acknowledging the receipt of the letter of the 11th March previous, and says:

"I have to inform you that it is not the intention of the Government to cause any re-surveys to be made. Of course, any sub-division differing from the regular survey which they may desire they can procure for themselves, when the lands come into their possession. You will please, therefore, communicate this decision to the persons interested."

I need hardly say that the lands might never come into their possession according to that plan, because, as the surveys were township surveys, disregarding the river altogether, it was, in no case, possible to know the numbers, or to adjust the frontages, depths, or improvements, and the rear lots might be taken up by other persons. On the 4th September, 1882, a petition was forwarded from St. Antoine de Padoue to Sir John A. Macdonald, Minister of the Interior, which contained signatures of persons, of whom the great bulk were subsequently insurgents. St. Antoine de Padoue is a parish south of St. Laurent, and the church is at Batoche, which is mentioned as having been shelled in the engagement. The petition, which is in French, is as follows, being translated into English:

"ST. ANTOINE DE PADOUE,
"SOUTH BRANCH OF THE SASKACHewan,
"4th September, 1884.

"To the Right Honorable Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD,
"Minister of the Interior, Ottawa.

"Sir.—We, the undersigned French half-breeds, for the most part, settled on the Saskatchewan, in the district of Prince Albert, North-West Territory, approach your honorable person in this petition to expose with confidence the difficult position in which we find ourselves, with regard to the lands which we occupy in that portion of the Territory. We call the attention of the Government upon this matter, which preoccupies us greatly:

"Obliged, most of us, to abandon the prairies, which no longer can furnish us with means of living, we have come in great numbers during the course of the summer, and settled along the south branch of the Saskatchewan. Being satisfied with the soil and the country, we have gone actively to work to clear the land, with the hope of sowing next spring, and, in the meantime, to build up houses for the winter, which will soon be at hand. The surveyed lands being already occupied or sold, we were forced to occupy lands which are not yet surveyed, besides being ignorant, for the greatest part, of the rules and the regulations of the Government regarding the Dominion lands. What was not, therefore, our astonishment and anxiety when we were told that once the land is surveyed we shall be obliged to pay two dollars per acre to the Government, if our lands are comprised in the odd-numbered sections. Desirous, moreover, of living together, so as to be able to obtain more easily a school-house and a church, we are, Monsieur the Minister, poor people, who have not the means of paying the price of those lands without being totally ruined, if we lose result of our labors by allowing them to pass into the hands of strangers, who shall go to the land office at Prince Albert and pay the price stipulated by the Government.

"In our anxiety, we appeal to your spirit of justice as Minister of the Interior and leader of the Government and we implore you to at once reassure us by giving orders so that we shall not be troubled on our lands, and that the Government will grant us the privilege of considering us as occupants of even sections, since we occupy those lands in good faith; and having occupied this country since such a long time as masters, and having so often defended it against the Indians at the price of our blood, we think that it is not asking too much that the Government give us the right of occupying peacefully our lands, and that it should make some exceptions to its regulations, by granting gratuitously lands to the North West half-breeds. We further desire that Government should give orders to have the lands surveyed along the river ten chains wide by two miles long: it is the old custom of this country to distribute land in this manner, and thus it would enable us to recognise the limits of our respective lands.

Monsieur the Minister, we hope that you will favorably receive this petition which we send you, and that we shall know your decision as soon as possible. This is our anxious wish, while praying the Almighty to protect you and to keep you at the head of this great country of Canada, which you govern with so much wisdom.

"We have the honor to remain, Monsieur the Minister, your humble petitioners:—Gabriel Dumont (wounded); Baptiste Rochot (prisoner); Patrice Touron (prisoner); Calixte Touron (killed); Francois Touron (prisoner); Joseph Vandale (killed); Joseph Delorme (killed); Baptiste Vandale (prisoner); Adolphe Nolin (prisoner); Ignace Poitras (prisoner); Maxime Poitras (prisoner); Emmanuel Champagne (prisoner) and others.

copy

NORTH-WEST TROUBLES.

Mr. BLAKE. That letter was not so long unanswered. On the 13th October, 1882, it is acknowledged by the Deputy Minister of the Interior, addressed to Mr. Charles Nolin, St. Antoine de Padoue, south branch of the Saskatchewan, as follows :—

" In reply, I am directed to request you to inform the petitioners that when the proper time arrives the case of each *bona fide* settler will be dealt with on its own merits; but as regards the surveying of the land in question, that all lands in the North-West Territories will be surveyed according to the system now in force."

So you will observe, Sir, that so far as regards their difficulty with respect to the odd lots, no redress is suggested, and as regards surveys, they are told that the section survey is to be the only survey for them. On the 16th January, 1883, Rev. Father André, Superior of St. Laurent, North-West Territories, wrote to the Minister of the interior, Sir John A. Macdonald, as follows :—

" I write you for the purpose of calling your attention to the painfully embarrassing position in which the French half-breeds settled on the southerly banks of the Saskatchewan are placed.

" According to an old custom in Manitoba, they took up their lots 10 chains wide in front, by two miles in depth, trusting that the Government, acting on the rule already established, would survey these lands into lots 10 chains in width by two miles in depth. Their surprise may be imagined when they saw the land along the Saskatchewan measured off into squares of 40 chains, without heed being given to their just claims and protests. What is the result of this abnormal division? Our half-breeds are overwhelmed with difficulties on account of their lands, and this proceeding will now sow discord among our people and will render the Government odious in their eyes, considering it as guilty of a gross injustice towards them. This survey lamentably mixes things. Some lose their lands, which are being grabbed by their neighbors, others see the fruits of their industry and their improvements dissipated. This unhappy state of things could be easily made to cease, by giving ear to their just claims; and how can this be refused them when you granted a similar favor to Prince Albert. All the lands along the branches of the Saskatchewan have been surveyed in this manner. Every body was satisfied, and not the least complaint was heard about the survey. I cannot understand, Sir, why your surveyors should have two different methods of parcelling the public domain—one for Prince Albert, 10 chains in width by 2 miles in length, which we approve, and which we claim as a right, seeing you have granted it for Prince Albert—the other of blocking out the lands in squares of 40 chains, without taking the river or the location of the settlers into consideration. The latter method we protest solemnly against, all of us, and humbly pray, Sir, that you order a new survey, and thus validate our request. Already the people of this colony have addressed to you a petition on this subject, but the answer given under your directions is not one calculated to inspire them with the hope that you would right the wrong of what they complain. Knowing the difficult situation in which our people are placed, I have resolved to make another effort, which I trust will bring happy results, and I dare to hope that you will accede to their just requests, and no later than next summer order a new survey of the lands on the south branch of the Saskatchewan. By your kind concurrence in this matter you will do an act of justice to our people, and render them a service for which they will ever be thankful."

No acknowledgement of or answer to that letter is brought down. The petition of the settlers of Prince Albert of 1882-83 contains the following :—

" And whereas a great number of immigrants, not only from the older Provinces of the Dominion, but from Great Britain as well, came to this section of the country during last spring and summer, with the intention of taking up homesteads, but in consequence of the small tract of country that has been surveyed, all of which has been taken up, they went away."

The petition continues:

" We would urge on your hon. House the importance of having a portion of the wood lands lying to the north of the north branch of the Saskatchewan, and opposite Prince Albert, surveyed into wood lots, so that your petitioners and other settlers may receive at your hands their just allotment, as these lands are being rapidly depleted by those who are not actual settlers, and who have not the welfare of this country at heart."

I pointed out, in my speech on the motion for papers :

" There are about 3,000 farmers in this settlement, and there is said—although the district contains a good deal of good land—to be considerable poor land; and there being only a small amount of land surveyed and properly certified at the Department, it was found impossible to locate upon lands with any certain knowledge of whether they were within odd or even-numbered sections."

The First Minister, in answering me, on that occasion, said :

" Similar complaints are made in every new settlement by persons who are anxious to have the country opened to them and surveyed, and patents granted. No matter whether it is in an outlying district, or in the vicinity of more settled parts, they are anxious to have all the advantages of an old, well organised, well settled country. One reason of the delays at Prince Albert has been alluded to by my hon. friend, that is the nature of the surveys. The settlers are scattered along the North Saskatchewan for a great distance. Some of them have complained that they should have long, narrow strips of land, running back three or four miles into the country, such as we were obliged to grant to the settlers along the Red River and Assiniboine River, for the purpose of settling all the disputes that existed in that country. It is not proposed in any way to carry out the same system in Prince Albert. The general system of survey in the North-West has been applied to the Prince Albert district, and, of course, the lines as run will not in every distance form the boundaries of the different sections or quarter-sections which the settlers have taken up, without reference to any survey whatever. But no persons have been removed or ousted. There must be a system of give and take. The survey there has been going on, and the proper officer has been sent there for the purpose of confirming settlers who have *bona fide* claims according to law. Many cases must arise of settlers going in and taking up fancy spots; and some system must be arranged by which the system of survey shall be adhered to, and the settlers substantially protected at the same time."

Then, with reference to the question of delays in the surveys, the hon. gentleman also stated :

" The Department cannot pretend to survey at once, at the call of a body of settlers, who go and settle wherever they please in the outlying districts of that vast country, whenever called upon or where people want their farms marked out. The returns laid before Parliament during the past three years show how very active the Surveyor General's branch of the Department of the Interior has been in laying out townships. Some three or four hundred townships have been laid out during the past year. Every Dominion surveyor who has passed the examination and can be got, we are only too glad to employ and send up to the North-West. Of course, the first surveys were made in the vicinity of the Red River, and extended westward, and the main force of the surveyors has been employed on the line of the Pacific Railway westward. But surveys have been going on at the same time in other portions of the country—at Prince Albert, at Edmonton, and at other points, and along the boundary south of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Government intend to ask Parliament to give them a large grant for surveying next season. With the increasing number of applications from surveyors, and increasing experience, we hope that the present year will show very much larger reach of country surveyed than has been covered in any previous year. I hope that perhaps five or six hundred townships will be under survey during the year 1883. If we have a favorable season for the purpose, we expect to be able to cover that quantity of ground. Last year and the year before, the weather in the spring of the year was adverse, and in some portions of the country to be surveyed it was found impossible for the surveyors to get in until well on in the summer. We hope those were abnormal conditions. We have a large staff, and with a long summer we ought to be able this year to cover a great quantity of ground. There will be no objection to the granting of this motion."

Now, I want to call attention to the fact that the hon. gentleman seemed to treat the case of these people as if it were a new and a remote settlement. But it was one of the oldest settlements of the Territories. The people had gone in early; more people were going in year by year; they were exposed to great hardship and disappointment, and special encouragement should have been given to them, instead of engaging in the mad race of surveying so many millions of acres, upon which a single settler has not yet gone. I admit that great attention should be given to opening up the country for settlement, but I say a little more attention should have been given to enabling those to get on who are actually in. Now, Sir, in the same years of 1882 and 1883, there was going on that trouble which commenced in the fall of 1882, with reference to St. Albert and Edmonton and Saskatchewan, that to which I already alluded on the subject of surveys. On this question, important as it is, nothing at all has been brought down; but from other sources I have been able to gather some unofficial information, which will not be uninteresting to the House, and will throw some light upon the question. In October, 1882, some surveyors sent out by the Government were already engaged in the surveys at St. Albert, on Sturgeon River, a tributary of the Saskatchewan, and on the Saskatchewan. For the more perfect understanding of the facts, they applied for the assistance of the missionary

poor

in charge of the place, to give notice to the people of Prince Albert that they did not wish to imply, by adopting the general system of survey, that the rights of the settlers to a subsequent special survey would not be recognised. They said, through him, that the people need not be annoyed at seeing them drawing lines from north and south and east to west through their lands and properties. According to them, it was a simple matter of form, and the means of continuing more easily the survey, by way of townships, once out of the settlement; and after they were gone a special surveyor, then employed at Edmonton, would come to St. Albert to make the special survey. Some weeks later that surveyor commenced his work. The people were contented; things were going for the best, when there arrived from Ottawa an order to cease the work, with a notice to the settlers of St. Albert that they must be satisfied with the general survey. No such order or notice has been brought down. This unjust order was no sooner known than the discontent of the settlers was at its height. Who would uphold their rights? Who would prevent the ruin of the settlement? Their thoughts went, naturally, towards the mission. His Lordship the Bishop being absent, the missionary at once despatched a messenger to Edmonton, with the following despatch to the telegraph office:—

"To His Lordship Bishop Grandin, Ottawa,

"Survey by township impossible for St. Albert. It will ruin the settlement. General discontent. See immediately the Minister of the Interior."

Here I may observe that we have no information brought down to us as to the time when, and the circumstances under which, the Government altered that policy which I have pointed out as to the surveys of these lands. Unfortunately, the telegraphic line was out of order; the despatch was nearly 15 days before reaching its destination, and under these circumstances it was thought well that the situation should be made known, and the following notice was sent to the journal of the locality:—

"The colony of St. Albert is to-day in a state of real excitement, and is very discontented at the unjust manner in which it seems to be treated. The inhabitants of this colony have occupied their lands many years already, and most of them even before the annexation of these Territories to Canada. St. Albert was founded in 1860 by the Catholic mission, which immediately gathered around itself a considerable number of inhabitants. To-day about two hundred families have established on both sides of the Sturgeon River, in a radius of six or eight miles to the east, and six miles to the west. These families are mostly half-breeds, born and brought up in that country, which is certainly theirs by every title; they have incontestable rights to the land, rights which have been conceded by the Manitoba Act. New settlers amongst us have bought lands occupied long before the annexation to Canada. We certainly form the most ancient, and, up to the present time, the most numerous colony of the district, and now they seem to act as if we did not exist. They try to treat us as they tried to treat the people of Manitoba before the troubles of 1870. They will not recognise our right to have a river survey; we must content ourselves, they say, with a township survey. Such an arrangement is at once unjust and absurd, for it would be the ruin of the colony. There is not one of the old settlers who would not witness the partial or total loss of his labor or his improvements; in many cases two, three or four families would find themselves on the same half or the same quarter-section, since, in the system of survey, they wish to impose upon us, the river does not form a limit. Our population is peaceful, calm and submissive; but if it were the victim of such an injustice, if the inhabitants were to be treated as a conquered people, if they were not to receive, in the name of justice, what has been granted to Edmonton, Prince Albert and in the Province of Manitoba, they would protest and would submit only to open force.

"In the name and in the interest of the population of St. Albert.

"H. Leduc, Priest."

"Two or three weeks elapsed while they were waiting for despatch from Ottawa. Finally, doubting as to whether the despatch had been transmitted to Bishop Grandin at the capital, doubting still more whether justice would be obtained from the Minister of the Interior, fearing matters would go from bad to worse, the inhabitants of the country resolved to hold a public meeting in the schoolhouse at St. Albert, on Monday, the 8th January. At the day and hour fixed, all the male population of the colony gathered at the appointed place. Everybody appeared, much excited and discontented, and the topic of all conversations was the survey of lands, the injustice that the Government was about to perpetrate, in refusing to acknowledge the rights of the settlers, the hardships, the fatigues, the difficulties sustained by them

in clearing, cultivating and improving their lands, etc. Some spoke of nothing less than imitating the conduct of the Manitoba half-breeds in 1870, and repelling the injustice by arms. Under these circumstances, Father Lestanc providentially arrived from Battleford, at St. Albert. When the population was assembled in the school-house, the object of the meeting was announced. The necessity of doing nothing that might compromise the cause of the colony was pointed out, but at the same time the urgency of taking every legal means to enlighten the Government on the situation and the injustice with which they were threatened. The meeting appointed a president, and Father Lestanc was called to the office of secretary. The discussion became lively at once; each one pleaded for his rights, expressed his cause of complaints and of discontent, and the best and most effective means to be taken were discussed. Finally, the conclusion, which seemed the most likely to obtain the desired object, was reached—to obtain prompt and entire justice. It was decided that the population should send a delegation of two members to the Government at Ottawa."

And Mr. Maloney, the president of the meeting, and Father Leduc, were chosen as delegates, and, as I said, the sum of \$600 was subscribed to pay their expenses. This letter was written to them:

"To Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney:

"GENTLEMEN.—The committee appointed by the inhabitants of St. Albert, at a public meeting at Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan, request you to start and go to Ottawa, in order to inform the Government of Canada of the causes of our complaints, as they are set out in the annexed documents."

But these documents have not been brought down:

"We do not doubt that it is owing to a want of reliable information that the Government seems ready to do us a great injustice. We are certain that the Hon. Sir John Macdonald, Minister of the Interior, is disposed to render full justice to all the subjects of Her Majesty, our gracious Sovereign. We are equally convinced that he will recognise the same rights and privileges to us as those recently conceded to the ancient colony of Prince Albert, and that he will favorably receive your demands. We rely, gentlemen, on your zeal and your devotion to our common cause. You will know how to lay it before the Government and defend it, and we hope for the complete success of your delegation.

"Signed on behalf of the committee,

"W. CUST, President.

"SAM. CUNNINGHAM, Secretary."

Shortly afterwards these gentlemen started on their long and painful journey. On their way they stopped at Fort Saskatchewan for a day, where the inhabitants gathered, and added a contribution of \$100 towards the expenses of the mission. After twenty-four days' travel through the prairies and woods, they reached Qu'Appelle station. They stopped a little while at Winnipeg, where they received the advice and suggestions of Archbishop Taché, as to the conduct of their mission. Ultimately they reached Ottawa, and they found there Bishop Grandin, who had been engaged in the discharge of his duties, of which, as I said, I have but a very meagre account. They explained that Bishop Grandin had received good promises, fine promises, but they say:

"It needs more than promises or words—*verba volant—acta manent*—and authentic writings are necessary—*scripta manent*."

They had many discussions with the Minister, and having received from him, as to their own demands, some favorable answers, they requested these also to be written, saying:

"Mais en fin de compte nous n'avons encore que de l'eau bénite de cour. Il faut battre le fer quand il est chaud."

And the Minister having told them that if they would send in a written statement they would get a written answer, they sent in a letter, which the Government have not brought down, but which, notwithstanding, I will take the liberty to read:

"To the Hon. D. L. Macpherson, Acting Minister of the Interior, at Ottawa.

"Sir.—We, the undersigned, delegates of the inhabitants of St. Albert, Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan, appointed by them to come to Ottawa to set forth their demands and their complaints to the Government of Canada, have the honor to address to you the enclosed memorandum, summarily indicating the said complaints and demands.

"In the interview which you had the kindness to grant to us on the 7th instant, you have favorably listened to our requests, and we have been happy to learn that full and entire satisfaction would be given by the Government to the population that we represent.

copy

"We would now be extremely obliged if this assurance were given us in writing.

"(Signed), "H. LEDUC, Priest.
 "P. MALONEY.

This memorandum, which is enclosed, and which, though not brought down, I will also read, is addressed to the Acting Minister of the Interior (Sir David Macpherson):

"The inhabitants of St. Albert, in the Territories of the North-West, pray the Government of the day to be good enough to take into consideration the establishment by them of a large and flourishing colony on the Sturgeon River, 9 miles from Edmonton, in the district of Alberta, North-West Territories. In 1861 His Grace Archbishop Tache, chose this locality for the founding of a Catholic mission, and the next year buildings were erected and numerous settlers established themselves at the mission. Some years later many families had settled there, and had chosen land and cultivated it. At the period of annexation to Canada St. Albert had a population of over 900 souls. Though twice decimated by small-pox in 1870, the colony became even more flourishing than before. New settlers arrived, and either took up land or bought land already occupied, and St. Albert is more prosperous than ever. The settlers waited patiently a special survey of their lands, in the hope that their rights would be recognised; and thus things stood when, in December last, they were told that they would have to content themselves with the township survey. Such a survey would be nothing short of the ruin and destruction of the colony established on each side of the river and on the banks of the lake. In order to be nearer the church and the school the settlers had built close to each other, taking narrow strips of land, but claiming always two miles in depth, as has been allowed in Manitoba and at Prince Albert. If it is intended now to compel them to be governed by the general system of survey, they will find themselves 7, 8, 9 or 10 on the same section; they will lose the fruit of their labors and improvements, and will be thrown into complete disorder. That is why the inhabitants of St. Albert ask, through the medium of their delegates, the Government of the Dominion to grant them a river survey, with two miles in depth, as in Manitoba and at Prince Albert. Having occupied their lands for a long time, even before the annexation of the Territories to Canada, they demand the acknowledgment of their rights and the issue of letters patent. The settlers of St. Albert, Edmonton, and of Fort Saskatchewan, beg that the river survey be extended from Edmonton to Fort Saskatchewan, inclusive; there, also, with two miles of depth from the banks of the river, as has been conceded on Red River and the Assiniboine. In case the land comprised within these two miles of depth, has been already occupied in good faith by some settlers before the survey, then let a mile only in depth be granted, but with the privilege of taking elsewhere a preemption of 160 acres of the lands of the Government."

Then they asked also for the immediate opening of a land office, and the early issue of the patents, and they asked that all lands occupied in good faith before the survey was made, and before it was possible to know whether it would be surveyed or not, should be recognised as the property of the occupant, and that none of the first occupants should be obliged to pay more than would have been exacted by the land board at the moment they took possession, and that the subsequent laws relative to preemption and occupation should not have a retroactive effect. They asked for representation in the Commons, and lastly made a demand with reference to the unextinguished Indian title, which I read in dealing with that portion of the case. There were three weeks of expectation after this memorandum went before the Minister, without a new interview being had. They then went, accompanied by the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Royal) and the hon. the Minister of Militia (Mr. Caron), to ask a written reply to all their demands and petitions. They were assured anew that they would be entirely satisfied; that the Government was actively engaged with the business of the delegation; that the work of framing the reply was going on and would be soon completed, and that the reply would be, in a few days, addressed to them. Subsequently, they learnt, from Mr. Royal, that the thing was going on according to their wish, slowly but surely. During this time Bishop Grandin had worked without ceasing for the success of his mission and that of the delegates. Then follow some general statements as to Bishop Grandin's success on matters more particularly affecting the interests of the church and education, but I have not the statement of what Bishop Grandin accomplished with reference to the matters now in hand. Those are still in the pigeon holes. Then there was a very

long interview with the First Minister. All the petitions were examined and discussed, and although all were not granted, the most important were not rejected. The paper then proceeds to say that all this business was done by word of mouth, but that His Grace the Archbishop would not leave until he had the authentic document signed by the proper party. If I am rightly informed, he had to leave on the promise that the document would reach him at Winnipeg, but I have not learned that he ever got it. It is not brought down. The result of the mission of these people, Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney, as stated to me, is this:

"A special river survey is granted; lands occupied or possessed before the annexation of the North-West to the Dominion will be recognised by the Government; the survey will extend two miles back, starting from the river; those who had established themselves before the survey on lands that are now reserved will not be troubled in their settlement; a land office will be opened at Edmonton, and a registration office is also granted; a French magistrate or a judge will be named; the House is now occupied with the question of the Métis."

But although these gentlemen were urgently claiming a writing and pointing out the importance of it, and although in subsequent papers it appears to be stated they did get their writing, that writing is not brought down, and I am not able to read it to you. You see by these statements that the result, as far as the people of St. Albert and Edmonton and of Fort Saskatchewan were concerned, if the information which I have is trustworthy, was that the decision and determination of the Government to depart, as far as the River Saskatchewan was concerned, from their old river survey plan and to stick to the township lots, had to be altered, owing to the pressure that they had to yield, and that they did concede to the extent I have mentioned. The question is, whether having conceded, as far as these people were concerned, on the north bank of the Saskatchewan, they ought not to have acceded also, as far as those of the south branch were concerned, who had complained earlier, were complaining still, and to whom it was a very serious question. Upon that subject a little light is shown by the general report of Mr. Pearce, their officer, on the 12th of March, 1885, with reference to the settlement of claims, in which he said:

"From correspondence in the files sent to me, it appears that it was the intention of the Government, as late as the spring of 1883, to re-survey into river lots the portion of land settled on by these half-breeds at St. Laurent."

But no such papers are brought down, and we are therefore in the dark as to the foundation of that observation of Mr. Pearce, reliable as it must be. Then, on the 19th September, 1883, Mr. Pearce writes from the Land Commissioner's office at Winnipeg, as follows:

"Sir,—During my recent visit to Prince Albert I learned that portions of land had been held by French half-breeds, for the most part, for many years, without entry having been obtained, although two years had already elapsed since the townships became open for entry."

"I instructed the agent to detail his assistant, who is conversant with the French language, to make an inspection of these lands, and to inform the settlers of the necessity of making their entries immediately."

"The agent had been taking some of these entries lately and, at the same time, receiving the applications and recommending for patent. As mentioned in another communication, the Land Act does not permit such a course, unless entries are made within three months of date of land being open for entry."

"I consequently instructed him to discontinue the practice, until specially informed on the matter."

There crops out again with special reference to the half-breeds, the difficulty created by the unfortunate Order of 1879, to which I have already made some reference, under which, on a misapprehension, the settlers were informed that their old settlement would not count, and that they were practically precluded from any benefit of that settlement, and, so did not enter; but here, as I would judge, the abstention from entering these lands was in part due to the circumstance of the demand for the re-survey into river lots. In October, 1883, the North-West Council memorialised the Government on the subject:

poor

"Your memorials also pray for more extended surveys in the country of the North Saskatchewan; that the special settlement survey in the South Saskatchewan, in the parish of St. Antoine, made by Mr. Aldous, D. L. S., be approved; and that the land agent at Prince Albert be instructed to receive entries for such lands; that the land in the parish of Grandin, St. Laurent and St. Louis, and fronting on the South Saskatchewan, be surveyed in ten chain lots, it being occupied by settlers in this manner."

These are the townships on the scene in question. That was despatched on the 9th October, 1883, and referred by the Privy Council to the President of the Council and the Minister of the Interior, on the 18th October, 1883, but nothing, so far as we can find, came of that reference. Nothing is brought down. In October, 1883, there was a mass meeting of the inhabitants of Prince Albert, at which over 150 were present, and the 4th resolution endorsed the recent memorial of the North-West Council, embracing, among other things, this:

"Insisting on the necessity of more surveys in the North Saskatchewan district."

The 5th resolution referred to a question of wood lots:

"That this meeting has heard with alarm that the lands on the north side of the Saskatchewan River, immediately opposite the town of Prince Albert, which it had been understood would be laid off as wood lots for the use of the settlers, and which, for some time, have been reserved for unknown purposes, are now being surveyed and sub-divided into townships and sections, it is said either for settlement or railway reserves—the effect of which will be to deprive the settlers of the means of obtaining wood for domestic purposes except from a great distance and at a great expense."

But nothing is brought down. And a copy was ordered to be sent to Sir John A. Macdonald. On the 19th November, 1883, a petition was sent, signed by 31 persons from St. Louis de Langevin—that is the parish on the river front of which the lands of the Prince Albert Colonisation Company are situate—to Mr. Duck, in these words:—

"Sir,—The undersigned farmers, residing in the parish of St. Louis de Langevin, on the south branch of the Saskatchewan, have the honor to make you the following recital of their wrongs, with regard to the lands which they occupy.

"Several amongst us are here since the years 1873-74, and '75; others, more numerous, since 1880. We have all of us taken possession of our lands, according to the mode formerly followed on the Red River and Assiniboine lands, to wit: river lots.

"In the fall of 1880 we petitioned the Minister of the Interior at Ottawa to grant us a special survey in river lots, such as was granted to the Prince Albert settlement and to part of that of St. Laurent. We all of us have signed the said petition, not excepting Mr. Michel Cannay, who has since entered his land at your office in a square lot, and against whose act we strongly protest by these presents."

I have not seen this petition, which they say they sent in 1880. It is not brought down:

"Since then we have sent new petitions for the same object at different times, supporting our case with the influence of all the persons of high standing who took an interest in us, as Mr. Joseph Royal, M.P., S. H. Macdowell, M.C., N. O. L. Clarke, S.G., His Lordship Bishop Grandin, and the Rev. Father Leduc.

"Finally, last spring, the Rev. Father Leduc, who had been sent as delegate to Ottawa by the populations of Edmonton and of St. Albert, showed us the answer of the Government, which promised a special survey for all the inhabited lands of the Saskatchewan. Since then we have been waiting in vain."

We want to see that letter that Father Leduc showed these people. But it is not brought down.

"As we have said at the beginning, several amongst us have occupied their lands long enough to have a right to a patent, and nevertheless it is impossible to have them even entered at your office.

"We therefore humbly beg you to communicate to the Government which you represent the wrongs which are partly indicated above, and to beg it to put an end to them as quickly as possible, for the greater welfare and tranquillity of the loyal subjects of Her Majesty the Queen of England, the undersigned.

"Your very humble servants."

There are thirty-one signatures to that petition, of whom sixteen were on the colonisation company's tract. On the 9th December, 1883, Mr. Louis Schmidt and Mr. Baptiste Boucher, who was one of those wounded in the fights, addressed a letter to Mr. Duck, with reference to this petition saying :

"Since the annexed petition has been made and signed, some circumstances well calculated to redouble the anxiety which we already felt with regard to our lands, have taken place. To our knowledge, a certain Thos. Salter has again gone and entered a quarter of a section of land at your office, and this parcel of land, situated three-quarters of a mile from the river, was already taken as part of the river lot, with work done upon it on the river shore. We regret that the Government has not communicated to you their intention to grant river lots, so that you might thus enter at your office the lands comprised in the river lots. We hope that you will make your Government understand the true position in which we are placed, so that it may put a stop to it."

So that the petition reached Mr. Duck with this added circumstance of difficulty, and among the signers were Maxime Lépine, a prisoner; Baptiste Boucher, wounded; Isidore Dumas, killed; Charles Lavallée, wounded; William Swain, wounded, in the recent engagements. This petition and letter were enclosed to the Department on the 17th December, 1883, by Mr. Duck, who says:

"I have the honor to enclose herewith file No. 924 of this office, covering a letter from Mr. Louis Schmidt and others, as also a petition signed by a number of the inhabitants of the parish of Lotis de Langevin, praying for a re-survey of the lands on the River Saskatchewan, within the parish into lots of ten chains frontage, on a plan similar to that adopted in the parish of St. Laurent. As I have already expressed my opinion as to the desirability of such a re-survey, I have the honor to refer you to my previous letters on the subject."

So that you find Mr. Pearce and Mr. Duck repeatedly expressing their views as to the desirability of this re-survey, but no heed is given. No answer is returned. Well, Sir, the difficulties connected with the lands began to grow great, and on the 1st of February, 1884, a meeting of the settlers residing at St. Catharines is reported as being held on the 21st of January, 1884. A committee consisting of William Kennedy, James Isbister and Thomas Swain were appointed to draft a petition to the Government, setting forth the grievances under which the people were laboring with regard to land matters, and praying Inspector Pearce to take them into consideration, and requesting him to forward the petition to the Government. A resolution was passed to the effect that the half-breed population of the North-West were unjustly treated, in not having the same privileges as regards land grants and scrip extended to them which had been enjoyed by their brethren in Manitoba. At a subsequent meeting at Lindsay school house, Red Deer Hill, these resolutions were endorsed, giving power to the committee to add any others. Thomas Millar, Charles Adams and Wm. Platt, secretary, were appointed a committee. A meeting of the settlers of the south branch was held on the 29th January. Mr. Andrew Spence was called to the chair, and Mr. Phillip Turner was appointed secretary. The resolution passed at St. Catharines and the ridge were read and discussed. A committee was appointed to draw up a memorial to the Government, namely, Messrs. A. Spence, W. McCorrister and Robert Stevens. Mr. S. J. Jackson was authorised to obtain the co-operation of the French settlers in carrying out the resolutions passed at various meetings; but so far as I have been able to observe, I do not find any of these petitions or resolutions amongst the papers produced. Then, on the 19th January, 1884, Father Vegreville, missionary at St. Louis de Langevin, wrote to Capt. Deville, chief inspector of surveys:

"I have just seen the inspector, Mr. Pearce. To my great surprise, this gentleman was unable to answer, in a satisfactory manner, the questions I put to him. He confined himself to advising me to write to you, promising to do so himself immediately. About a dozen years ago some settlers established themselves upon the bank of the branch of the river Saskatchewan. Towards the end of the winter of 1881 the missionary at St. Laurent (west side of the river, section 21, township 44, range 1, W. 3) no longer able to serve the whole population, which was growing and extending to a distance, I was called upon to establish a new mission at Eatoche Crossing, township 43, range 1, W. 3, about eight miles above St. Laurent, and on the opposite bank, which was becoming more rapidly populated. The presence of the missionary, combined with the local advantages of good land situated on the banks of a great river, led those poor people to ask that their lands should be surveyed, in order that they might enter them, and be enabled to obtain possession by means of patents.

"I, myself, caused Mr. Duck, the Dominion land surveyor, to write several times to Ottawa, and always without success, until finally I became discouraged myself, and several people were obliged to leave the settlement, some selling their land for a nominal price, and others abandoning it without any compensation.

"In February, 1883, the Rev. Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney were deputed by the settlement to set forth our complaints and present our demands to the Government. They were given a written promise that the lands we occupied should be surveyed in river lots of 10 chains frontage by 2 miles in depth, and that this survey should take place in the autumn following, (1883).

"The autumn has passed, and winter is coming. What has become of the promises? Has any surveyor been instructed to do the work, and has he failed in his duty? That is what we ask of you to-day.

"I do not put these questions to you, Sir, in my own name alone, or in the name of the two missions that I have established upon the right bank of the south branch of the Saskatchewan. I repeat what Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney have said to the members of the Government in the winter of 1883. I tell you again what our settlers have said to the land agents at Prince Albert. I am the faithful interpreter of the sentiment of the population. Please consider the consequences of a painful delay. The settlers have formed and are every day forming settlements, without knowing where the limits of their future properties will be. These limits being right lines and inflexible parallels, will cut up fields, will pass through houses and will separate fields for convenience of access to which the houses have been built—these will be the inevitable consequences to those who have already built, or who may build hereafter, until a survey is made. What great inconvenience, what deplorable consequences! However, three-fourths of these troubles might have been avoided if the survey had been done when it was asked for and when it was promised.

"I hope, Sir, that the misfortunes which bear so heavily upon our population will soon come to an end, and the more so, as a word from you will suffice. You have the kindness to remind the surveyors charged with this work that it is more necessary in this part of the country than elsewhere, in places where settlement has not yet commenced. If the surveyors have not yet been selected, there are enough others in the country to enable you to name a staff, who could go upon the spot and make the people happy and satisfied, so far as circumstances will permit. I understand you to tell me to have patience; that everything will come out right in the end. These are words which, permit me to say, I can no longer accept. There is a double proof of it. Prince Albert was settled the same time that this colony began. The inhabitants of Prince Albert have had their lands surveyed a long time and have received their patents. In the second place, I do not want it to be said that there is in this country places where the emigrants are treated like helots."

"Opposite to the mission which we have established, that is to say, on the north shore Tp. 45 R. 27 and 28, W. 2, there are only two families, and already in the two townships the river squares have been changed into river lots. I see them marked on the map. For the last ten years a few families have been living on the north shore; there are about thirty at present. Next summer there will not be enough room for a part of those who have promised to come, and there is not a river lot which is surveyed. What would the immigrants do if they knew that in this country they can be treated with such unheard of partiality?

"If I was on the spot I could get this letter signed by the fathers of families, representing a population of 2,000 souls; but I prefer to send it to you immediately, hoping to receive your answer before the departure of Mr. Pearce."

On 14th February Mr. Deville, to whom that letter was addressed, transmitted it to the Deputy Minister, and in doing so, said:

"I beg to draw your attention to the clause stating that last year the Rev. W. Leduc and Mr. Maloney obtained from the Government written assurances that the lands occupied by French settlers on the south branch of the Saskatchewan would be laid out into river lots. I am not in a position to state whether or not such is the case, but I am aware a similar promise was made for the Saskatchewan, Edmonton and St. Albert settlements."

So we have evidence, in these papers I have read, of the fact that this promise was made for the settlement represented by Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney:

"The wishes of the settlers could easily be met without inconvenience or prejudice to the Government by adopting the following course: (1.) If the inspector of agencies, when on the ground, should be satisfied that the great majority of the settlers in a township desire river lots, then he should have power to direct that every homestead fronting on the river in that township shall be composed of four quarter-quarter sections, forming a lot of twenty chains in width by one mile in depth. (2.) Except when all occupants of a section prefer having it allotted into quarter sections, in which case their request should be complied with. (3.) Except when all the occupants of two sections desire that the lots should be ten chains in width and should extend two miles, to the depth of the two sections, in which case their wishes should also be complied with.

"A lot twenty chains wide by one mile deep would be described in the patent as composed of four-quarter sections. A lot ten chains wide by two miles deep would be described as the western, eastern, northern or southern halves of eight-quarter-quarter sections. The areas could easily be found by reference to this office."

On the 10th March the secretary of the Department wrote Mr. Deville a letter, as follows:

"A copy of your letter and a translation of that of the Rev. Mr. Vegreville have been sent to Mr. Commissioner Walsh, with a statement that the Minister approves of your suggestion, and a request that the inspector of Dominion land agencies be instructed accordingly."

Meantime, other correspondence was going on on the subject, and Mr. Pearce himself, on the 17th January, 1884, had written to the Minister of the Interior. He says:

"I have the honor to report that I was this day called upon by the Rev. Father Vegreville and Hon. Charles Nolin, in reference to the survey into river lots of the land bordering on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River, in townships 46, ranges 27 and 28, west 2nd meridian, and townships 44, and ranges west 3rd meridian. They state that the Government promised that sub-division into river lots would be made last year, and that it has not been done. At their request, I promised to submit the matter for your consideration. They will themselves communicate with you on the subject."

On the 10th March, 1884, the secretary of the Department wrote to Mr. Deville, enclosing a copy of that letter, and making this enquiry:

"Will you please state, for the information of the Minister, how this matter stands and what promises have been made to the petitioners?"

On the 12th March Mr. Deville answers:

"Some river lots have been laid out in the above townships, but the greater part of the river fronts has been sub-divided into sections. Rev. V. Vegreville and Hon. Chas. Nolin refer probably to a promise of the Minister to Rev. W. Leduc and Mr. Maloney, that certain lands would be laid out into river lots. I do not know whether or not such a promise has been made. As to the proper course to be adopted, I would refer you to my letter of the 14th ult. to the Deputy Minister."

That is the letter which I have already read. Mr. Pearce's report on the Prince Albert settlement contains this statement:

"Two classes of settlers have entered the Prince Albert district from Manitoba, namely, the English-speaking settlers, largely composed of half-breeds, and the French-speaking settlers, who are probably wholly half-breeds. The latter class settled in the neighborhood of Stobart, Duck Lake and the south branch. Those in the latter district have not yet made entry to their lands, nor have any claims been preferred by them, owing to the fact that they anticipated a re-survey of the district into river lots. When this re-survey is completed, the settlers will, no doubt, prefer their claims."

Mr. Pearce received from the Department Mr. Deville's plan which I have already read, and on reply he writes in March, as follows:

"That if he (Mr. Pearce) personally had time to make a survey of these settlers' holdings he has no doubt that entries could be granted in legal sub-division or fractional parts thereof, so that each person's interest would be as well protected as if laid off in river lots, but that he has not time to do as that suggestion would demand, much as he would like that kind of work. He also states that he thinks, owing to the points and bays on the river, it will be found that no regular width of lots will meet the wishes of those people; that their improvements are in all corners; that they seem determined to have their holdings laid out in river lots, and it will be found that they will expect the lines between every lot plainly defined on the ground at least. That is what Mr. Pearce states he inferred from interviews he had with them. Further, he tried to explain to them how their wishes could be met by means of a legal sub-division survey or fractional portions thereof; but he, fears they did not comprehend what he desired to impart. In fact, it was a matter which he took particular pains to discuss with others, and the better educated portion of the community, and the answer invariably was: That is plain enough to you as a surveyor, but it is Greek to us." Those parties are *bona fide* settlers and, as such, have or will acquire title, and if they wish their land laid off in a certain way, why should the Government object; in fact, it is the duty of the Government to survey it as requested."

"Mr. Inspector Pearce further states that neither the agent nor his assistants are sufficiently conversant with surveys to go to the ground and allot these lands by land survey, or fractional portion thereof, and would recommend one of two courses to be adopted: (1.) To send with agent on the ground a surveyor who can make a rough traverse of improvements on each section, and then entries can be given by legal sub-division, so as to preserve to each man his improvements, as far as possible. (2.) To lay out in river lots on ground, employing a surveyor of considerable experience in that kind of work; if he or his assistants spoke English so much the better, and give him sufficient latitude in his instructions, so that he could make the lot of such width as to preserve to each claimant, so far as possible, his improvements. In both cases he would suggest the township road allowance to be kept open. If the first course is adopted, he begs leave to suggest that Col. Sprout or

poor

J. L. Reid, D.L.S., who are now on the ground, be instructed to proceed with the agent and assist to carry it out, as he thinks time would be saved by so doing—expense also. All of which is respectfully submitted."

There was the suggestion of the man on the ground who had knowledge, who had seen the land and discussed the question with the people, who knew the facts and the difficulties, and who suggests two methods; but I find no statement in these papers of any action being taken on the subject after the report of Mr. Pearce. This was, mind you, in the spring of 1884, and after the Prince Albert settlers had been settled with. The question of the survey of the neighborhood of St. Laurent, in the half-breed settlement, was still undecided. On 26th April, 1884, Mr. Louis Schmidt wrote to the Minister as follows:—

"I am one of the settlers in the South Saskatchewan, in the electoral district of Lorne, who during the last 4 years, have sent petitions upon petitions to your Department to have their lands surveyed in 10 or 20 chains frontage by 1 or 2 miles long, as the same has been done for the Prince Albert settlement on both the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan. I regret to say that so far our prayer has not yet been granted, nor even an answer of any kind has been given, and I feel bound to say that such a state of things is almost intolerable.

"The most part of those settlers, and I am among the number, have lived on and cultivated their lands for over three years, and ought to be entitled to a patent from the Crown, yet as they have taken up their land close to each other, and in the hope of having them sub-divided in river lots, they have not been able to enter them in the lands office. You see, Sir, in a glance, the real state of things, and I need not occupy your valuable time any longer in entering into more details. I pray you, therefore, most earnestly, to have the matter remedied for the satisfaction of so many loyal subjects of her Majesty and

"Your humble servant,

"LOUIS SCHMIDT."

That letter was written on the 26th of April, 1884. It was not answered until 15th July, 1884, and the answer was as follows:—

"I have to inform you that immediately upon the return of the Deputy Minister of the Interior from the North-West, which is expected to be within a very few days, your letter will be brought to his attention with a view to immediate action being taken in the matter."

that even on the 15th of July Mr. Pearce's suggestion as to satisfying these people had not been accepted, nor any method devised for dealing with the question. The Saskatchewan *Herald* of the 3rd of May, 1884, announced that the Government had rescinded the Order making the system of narrow river lots, as laid down in Red River, applicable to the principal rivers in the North-West. It goes on:

"When the older settlements on the Saskatchewan were founded, land was taken up, regardless of any other consideration than that there should be a river frontage, and every one accommodated his lines to the peculiarities of the location. This plan was found to interfere seriously with the Government survey in the Territories, and was disregarded, except in the case of some settlements, to which it was conceded. Last winter the Edmonton delegates pressed for its application to the settlements they represented; and the Government, believing that their arguments held good, as regarded the rest of the country, granted their request and extended the plan to all the rivers. With the progress of surveys, however, it became evident that the disadvantages were greatly in excess of any benefits or conveniences to be derived from the extension of the system of narrow frontages, and its discontinuance has therefore been decided on. There is a great deal of broken land on the banks of the Saskatchewan, so that in many places a man might have a river front and yet be unable to reach the water. There will always be broken and irregular lots on the rivers, and we believe an adherence to the rectangular system will, in the end, give the greater satisfaction."

There you have the announcement of the discontinuance of that practice. I am not now engaged in discussing the policy of that discontinuance, as applied to the Saskatchewan district, with a view of dealing generally, but I am dealing with the policy of the discontinuance of that practice, as applied to those who had settled while the practice was otherwise, who had been told it was the rule, who had settled according to the ancient custom of the country, who saw this privilege granted to the people at Prince Albert in 1878, and 1879 at Edmonton, at Saskatchewan, in 1883, and who saw it refused, or, at any rate, not granted to them in 1883 and 1884. On the 17th of July, 1884, *Le Manitoba*, after discussing the half-breed claims to the Indian titles, says:

"The great difficulty that the Métis have met with is in obtaining first, the survey of their lands, according to the actual limits and form of these lands. The slowness in the confirmation of their titles and the quasi refusal to accord them the grant asked for the extinction of their Indian rights are to-day the cause of all the discontent. Many petitions have been addressed to Ottawa, even delegates have been sent to the capital, at great cost, and still nothing has been accomplished."

Well, then, Sir, this was the state of things in the middle of 1884, when Louis Riel was asked to come: and now I turn back to the spring of that year, and the winter of that year—to February, 1884, when Mr. Pearce had gone up, after these long delays, to settle the claims at Prince Albert and St. Laurent. His mission was to deal with those places. He dealt with the case of Prince Albert, but he did not deal with St. Laurent, or Stobart, Duck Lake, Batoche, Grandin, St. Antoine de Padoue and St. Louis de Langevin; and why did he not? As I have told you, the cases of the white settlers of Prince Albert, after being investigated in January and February, were reported on in March; the proposed settlements were approved by the Minister in April, and if the settlements were just and reasonable the question was ended. But why did Mr. Pearce not go down to St. Laurent and these other places and dispose of their fewer claims? It was this question of the surveys and plans which prevented him. I will read you his telegram from Prince Albert in February, 1884:

"Have taken the evidence of all claims excepting St. Laurent and vicinity. Plans not received. As claimants there speak French, propose agent take evidence, when plans received and forward land board. I intend proceeding Winnipeg Wednesday, unless otherwise ordered. Made no report as yet."

Upon receipt of that telegram Mr. Hall writes to Mr. De Ville:

"In what state is the survey of St. Laurent, on the Saskatchewan? Mr. Pearce says that the plans have not yet been received at the Prince Albert agency, and until they are of course the claims of the settlers cannot be enquired into."

We have no answer to that letter, and no information as to when those plans were received. The secretary of the Department writes to Mr. Pearce in acknowledgment of his telegram:

"The suggestion contained in your telegram received here from Prince Albert, that the agent of that district be named to take the evidence in regard to the claims of settlers at St. Laurent, is approved of."

"Mr. Gauvreau has had considerable experience in the business of the Department, and ought to be quite capable of taking the evidence. I have sent to the chief inspector of surveys, enquiring in what state of progress the survey is, and when I hear from him I shall let you know."

I do not know whether Mr. Pearce ever heard from Mr. Burgess, but there is no letter brought down informing Mr. Pearce of the result of the enquiry. Now, the special survey at St. Laurent was approved by the Government in March, 1879, and that special survey was open for entry only in March, 1884, after Mr. Pearce had left the settlement altogether, I presume because the plans never had been sent up, and I suppose that they had been sent up on learning of this mistake; but for four years the special settlement was in the hands of the Government approved, but yet the lands were not opened. As to the settlers whose claims were investigated later, between forty and fifty were on that special survey, and between thirty and forty were between Gabriel's Crossing and Batoche, so that the great bulk of these dealt with were on the special survey—who were about one-half of the settlers—were not allowed to enter, although the surveys were approved in 1879, until after Mr. Pearce left the settlement in 1884. These other townships, or at least most of them, were approved in September 1881; one in November, 1883, and the other in December, 1883. Now, I have no answer to give you as to why the St. Laurent survey was not sent up before. But as to why no entries were made in the other townships I have already shown you that it was because the inhabitants were persistently asking that the method and practice under which they settled should be recognised and conceded to

copy

them, as it was to Prince Albert, as to the people of the north branch, as to the people of Edmonton, as to the people of St. Albert, as to the people of Fort Saskatchewan, and because they did not wish for, and, in fact, could not avail themselves, as they understood it, of the township survey, in order to get their lands. Mr. Pearce has given us his reason, in his letter of September, 1883, which I have read. He says these entries were not made because the re-survey was being expected, and the decision as to the re-survey was still being expected when Mr. Pearce was there in February, 1884. But there was another reason. The agent had been stopped by Mr. Pearce in September, 1883, in pursuance of the bungle of the Millar type. However the local agent was directed to investigate, and he did investigate, in May, 1884. The papers are brought down, but the investigation did not touch the lands of St. Louis de Langevin at all, because that was sacred soil; it was colonisation company's land, and it could not be touched, and therefore there was no investigation made of their cases. But the investigation was made of the other cases, and they were generally settled in one way or another. The first settlement in a few cases took place in each of the years 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, and 1878, and many settlements in each of the years 1879, 1881, 1882 and 1883. In some cases, as appears by the papers, there were very large improvements, and the names of many of those people appear in the lists of killed, wounded and prisoners. Now, I do not know what was the principle of the settlement that was made; but I point out that had the surveys been made and approved, and the plans sent up, the investigation might have taken place in February, 1884, as it was intended to do, as Mr. Pearce was ready to do, and as he was only prevented from doing by the circumstances to which I have alluded. Then, in May, 1884, when the investigation did take place, the excitement had got higher, and in June, 1884, Riel came into the country, and these complaints and disputes and difficulties about lands remained, and the agitation went on increasing. What was the relative condition, Sir, at that time, of the white settlement at Prince Albert and the half-breed settlements at St. Laurent and in the vicinity? The white settlement had had a hearing; it had had an investigation in January and in February, a report in March, and the decision of the Minister in April. What was the situation in the case of the half-breed settlements at St. Laurent? They had nothing until May; they had then an investigation of the agent; the report was sent on and nothing was done. Mr. Pearce did not report; he was not asked to report, according to any of the papers which have been brought down, although I ask, would not the ordinary dictates of prudence, say: Now, in the month of May you have the report of the agent on the cases of these half-breed settlers; send down your report on them, so that we may act at once and decide their future in reference to these lands. But he was not asked to report on any papers brought down to us, and, in fact, he did not report until the 17th of October; and then he reported late, but still in time, if this report had been acted upon. On the 17th of October he reported on St. Laurent, Duck Lake, Batoche, Grandin, St. Antoine de Padoue, though not

on St. Louis de Langevin; and having reported, what came of his report? It came down to Ottawa, and it was buried in the Department. While the report on the white settlers, which dealt with many hundreds of cases, and which established new principles, was disposed of in about three weeks, the report on the comparatively few cases, less than 100, dealing on the recognised old principles with the St. Laurent claims, was held over at Ottawa from the 17th of October, 1884, until the 9th of February, 1885, just while the difficulty was arising, while all the meetings were being held, while all the agitation and excitement was taking place, and on the 9th of February at last that report was approved by this telegram:

"February 9, 1885.—Report of land board on St. Laurent claims approved. Instruct Prince Albert agent to give effect thereto."

You can know the reason: the account I have given you in the last few hours shows you that February and March were notable months in the Department of the Interior. There had been warnings; the half-breed enumeration was arranged on the 28th of January; on the 4th of February Governor Dewdney was told of it; and on the 9th of the same February they found time to deal with the ninety-five cases of the St. Laurent settlers, and telegraphed to say that it was approved. Doubtless this was on account of further warnings not brought down; but the grace came too late. Once again, I say, I am not criticising the decisions; I am dealing with the question of there being a decision. The decision was reached on the 9th of February; by the time it reached the local agent the people were just on the eve of speaking out, and I observe by the *Mail* correspondent that in the wrecked house of one of the rebels was found a letter of the agent, informing him what his fate was to be. Thus, in this regard, there was the grossest apathy, delay, neglect, procrastination and incapacity which can be conceived; because, if there ever was a time when men should have been prompt it was at that time. In the fall of the year, the cases of the whites had been settled; those the half-breeds had not. They were agitating and complaining; their chief was among them, inciting and inflaming them; an increased force had been sent among them; the Government had done something towards repression; were they to do nothing towards redress? No; the papers come down in October, and they lie half October, all November, all December, all January, and until the 9th of February, in the office, without the Government touching them, without telling these people that they should have their lands, and on what terms they might have them. And so I say, both as to their lands and as to the half-breed Indian title, the statements I have made I believe are beyond successful contradiction. In old and sterner times men would have been impeached for conducting in this way the public affairs of the country. In these milder days we have substituted votes of censure, and I move:

To leave out all the words after "that" and insert the following instead thereof: It be Resolved,—That in the administration of North-West affairs by the present Government, prior to the recent outbreak, there have occurred grave instances of neglect, delay and mismanagement in matters affecting the peace, welfare and good government of the country.

poor copy

